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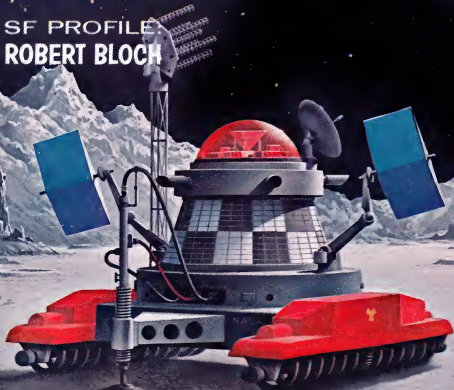
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MAG. 18

STAY OFF THE MOON!

by Raymond F. Jones

SF PROFILE
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AMAZING STORIES, Fact and Science Fiction, Vol. 36, No. 12, December, 1962, is published monthly by Ziff-Davis Publishing Company, at 434 South Wabash Avenue, Chicago 5, Illinois. Subscription rates: One year United States and possessions \$3.50; Canada and Pan American Union Countries \$4.00; all other foreign countries \$4.50. Second Class postage paid at Chicago, Illinois and at additional mailing offices.

Amazing

Fact and Science Fiction Stories

DECEMBER, 1962 Vol. 36, No. 12

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Cover: Alex Schomburg

Illustrating *Stay Off The Moon!*

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE: All subscription correspondence should be addressed to AMAZING STORIES, Circulation Department, 434 South Wabash Avenue, Chicago 5, Illinois. Please allow at least six weeks for change of address. Include your old address, as well as new—enclosing if possible an address label from a recent issue.

EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS must be accompanied by return postage and will be handled with reasonable care; however publisher assumes no responsibility for return or safety of art work, photographs or manuscripts.

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Editorial and Executive Offices
One Park Avenue
New York 16, New York
ORagon 9-7206
Advertising Manager
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Midwestern and Circulation Office
434 South Wabash Avenue
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EDITORIAL

IF there is one thing that I am getting fed up with (actually, I'm getting fed up with a lot of things, but let's take it slowly), it is the way newspaper and magazine writers report on some news event like the launching of a Venus probe or the orbiting of a Telstar, and then inevitably add some comment about how it was "almost like science fiction."

This strikes me not only as ignorant but condescending. It is about time that someone pointed out that our whole world is "almost like science fiction." Isn't it amazing, really, that a creature like man should have evolved on a whirling ball which in turn condensed out of interstellar gases? Isn't it amazing that we go about our daily business for several score of years with a lot of machinery ticking away inside us that most of us do not in the least understand? Isn't it amazing, really, that we can wake up in the morning and remember what happened yesterday, or make plans for tomorrow? What's memory, anyway? What's tomorrow? How do we know there'll be one. Isn't it all "almost like science fiction" about time travel, say.

Not long ago it was reported that astronomers had discovered some remarkable new facts about stars. Seems a lot of them live longer than scientists ever thought they did. Hot stars are cooler than scientists thought. The temperature and density of interstellar space seems to be a far cry from what our scientists had already said it was. Dr. Jean Pecker, of the Paris Observatory, observed that the new developments will cause "a real revolution" in astronomy.

Perhaps the stars, gentlemen, will after all prove to be holes in the sky?

Perhaps the structure of space will prove to be "almost like science fiction"?

Or perhaps we ought eventually to come to the point where, philosophically, everyone will recognize that the science of today is the science fiction of yesterday; and that the science fiction of today is the science of tomorrow.

* * *

FROM time to time you hear anguished moans from this corner—and from other editors
(Continued on page 128)

stay
off
the

MOON!

By **RAYMOND F. JONES**

Illustrated by **FINLAY**



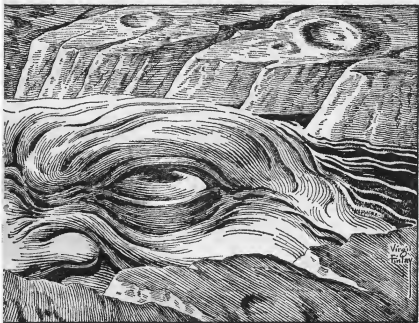
**How do you fill a pipette and measure out a half
c.c. of hydrochloric acid into a test tube—
from a quarter million miles away?**

THE real problem, of course, is not quite that simple. You don't literally fill a pipette or use a test tube; you activate metering circuits that force tiny, ground-glass plungers a measured distance in reagent pumps. You send signals that close some valves and open others, and apply heat and adjust tempera-

tures, and filter solutions, and send the product to a spectrometer that determines what you've got and how much.

Then you have to code it and get the information from the moon to earth.

James Cochran had seen the equipment work through hundreds of checkout analyses. But



he didn't understand it. He was a chemist, and he had drawn up the specifications for the chemical analyzers of the Prospector, but it had been the electronic boys who dreamed up the remote mechanization and the telemetry equipment that would allow him to sit before a complex panel at the Center and direct his chemical laboratory on the moon to learn what the moon was made of. Some of the light-headed technicians who worked on the project had dubbed it Operation Green Cheese, but Cochran had more respect for the complexity of the effort.

It was Sunday midnight. The beginning of countdown was forty hours away. Cochran's crew had finished the chemical checkout, but in the assembly hangar technicians still swarmed about the Prospector, giving final-check to the power and telemetry components.

Jim Cochran signed off the last of the check reports and dropped them in the slot for delivery to the Project Director. He turned off the lights over his own desk and went out to the hangar. Under the blaze of fluorescent lights the device looked like some monstrous insect. The differential housings over the worm-screw drives gleamed like a red, segmented carapace. The blue appendages of the solar cell boxes were extended as if in

some frantic appeal. The radar dish and the helical antenna extended mutely upward. And, like a furious proboscis, the exploratory drill, which would pierce the moon's skin to a depth of five hundred feet, seemed to gnaw at the concrete floor of the hangar.

Sam Jarvis, supervisor of electronic checkout, saw Jim Cochran enter and came over to him with a broad, weary grin. "AOK, so far! This package is going to be perfect. If only the rocket boys will set up a bird that will take it to the moon—"

"They'd better," said Jim. "I don't think I could ever go through this again if they dump the Prospector in the drink."

SAM turned back to look at the robot machine and the swarming technicians. "Yes, you could," he said. "All of us have gone through heartbreak time and again the past five years, watching them blow up, or fall back and burn in the atmosphere because the motors didn't ignite. Or seeing them get all the way to the moon and have some five-dollar transistor conk out. But we always have at it again. You will, too. You're new, but you're one of us now. You never back out when you've come this far."

Watching the Prospector, Jim knew Sam was right. It had taken some persuasion to bring him to this point, however. Until a

couple of years ago he had believed he would be content with ivory-tower plastics research for the rest of his life. The persuasion had been applied when Mary's brother, Allan Wright, had made the astronaut team.

Allan and Jim had grown up together. There was no other person Jim felt closer to except Mary and their two children. Allan had dreamed of space when they were kids, and when he was fifteen, he said, "I'm going out there. I don't know how. But, somehow, I'm going out there."

Now, he had been selected to captain the first Apollo voyage. He had been born for that purpose, he said.

But while he was still in the general pool of astronauts he had opened his campaign to get Jim into the space program. "They need the best brains they can get," Allan said. "You haven't got any right to sit in a musty old plastics lab while guys with half your ability try to get us into space. NASA will take you tomorrow!"

Jim didn't try to tell him that his plastics lab wasn't exactly musty, or that he didn't think of himself as one of the best brains in the country. But Mary sided with Allan; she was almost as excited about space as he was. In the end, Jim went to NASA. Within days, he had been assigned to head the development

of the Prospector chemical mechanization.

It had been something of a jolt to pull up all the roots he had so carefully put down for him and his family, and move to the hectic, bustling, space-frontier community of the Center. But he wasn't sorry. It put something new in the blood, something men had never known before.

Space!

The great Saturn lifted slowly, on a vast blossom of fire, with snowy lox streaming down its sides. Then it was gone, a twinkle of fire high above, among the stars. That was all.

Mary and Jim Cochran continued to stare at the fading twinkle, and finally they turned away. Allan had obtained permission to be in the blockhouse during the firing. It hadn't been necessary for Jim to be there. He didn't want to know the instant-by-instant telemetry reports which told whether or not the flight was successful. Sam or Allan would call him when they knew. That would be soon enough for him.

"Let's drive down to the beach and watch the moon from there," said Mary. "We can't just turn around and go home, like—like nothing had happened."

Jim smiled in the darkness. Mary was as eager as he was for the success of the flight. And she didn't have his fear of failure,

that kept him from wanting to know the maybe-yes, maybe-no indications that the telemetry would first show.

"Sure," he said, "that's a good place to watch it."

The moon.

THEY watched its reflection thrashing on the water as the breakers rolled across, under, and around it. It was the same image that men had watched and wondered about and feared—for a half million years. The first creatures that had any semblance of manhood had sat on their haunches on this same shore and watched the same moon and the same water.

And felt the same fears, Jim thought.

He didn't know whether it was fear or not, but there was some sense of awesome mystery that filled him when he looked at the moon. It had been that way all his life. He remembered how it was when he was a boy and he walked through the fields at night on his way home. He had to pass Cramer's Pond, and when the moon was up its light from the sky and its reflection from the pond seemed to fill the whole earth with a cold, silver light. He always hurried past the pond on such nights.

Mary felt it, too. "I wonder why the moon makes people feel the way they do."

"How does it make people feel?"

"Oh, kind of—kind of—you know!"

Jim laughed aloud. This was a typical Mary Cochran explanation. But it told him all he needed to know. What she said was quite true. He *did* know.

The baying of dogs on a wintry, moonlit night.

The madness called lunacy.

Seeds must be planted just so, in relation to the moon, or the crop will fail.

Men had always felt strange things about the moon. Would a Saturn missile and a mechanical monster in its nose be able to destroy all that?

Jim started the car. "Let's get back. I've got to know how the flight's going!"

* * *

They were still in the blockhouse, but the tension was relaxed. They were talking and watching the meters and cathode ray tubes without the strain and fear of failure. Jim knew the answer even before Sam and Allan walked up to him and slapped him on the back.

"Where the devil did you go?" said Sam. "I thought you were going to be right behind me when we fired, and you weren't here at all!"

It's like your first baby, you want to be there, and you don't. Was it a good shot?"

"Was it a good shot?" Allan's face became ecstatic. "We've never had a better one. On course all the way!"

The Project Director, Emil Hennesey was behind them. His face was bleak. "I expected you to be here for the firing, Cochran," he said. "It seems to display little interest in your end of the project that you didn't feel it necessary to show up."

Jim looked at him steadily and shrugged without answer. Hennesey was one guy whose presence on the space team Jim couldn't figure out. He was an ex-Major, and he had no capacity for dreaming. Men, machines, transistors, rockets—they were all the same thing, merely objects to be made to obey.

"You are aware of your next sequence of duties, I trust?" said Hennesey.

Jim nodded curtly. "I'll be ready."

SIXTY-SIX hours to the moon. That's what it takes with marginal escape velocity and free-fall conditions. But it was really five hundred thousand years and sixty six hours, Jim thought. Surely there hadn't been a single hour in all that time when someone, somewhere on earth had not felt the longing to solve the secret mystery of the moon.

Now they were about to find

the answer. But what would they have when they found it? They would know that the surface dust of the moon consisted of certain percentages of silicates and oxides. They would know that the under layers were composed of rocks, maybe of granite or limestone or basalt. They would determine how much of each.

And then it would be over. The quest of the ages would be answered with a few simple statements that could be obtained in any high-school chemistry lab—if the lab were on the moon.

Jim Cochran felt there *had* to be more to it than that.

Why do hogs howl at the moon on winter nights?

Why do men say that madness of the mind is lunacy?

Why must planting be done in the right phase of the moon?

Little sleep was had by any of the crew during the next two nights, even though the instrument stage of the ship was now completely inert except for occasional telemetry signals that were fed to the computers for course checking and correction. The ship was simply falling on its own momentum.

Six hours before moonfall, activities in the tracking center accelerated and the tension increased. There was no question of hitting the moon; the landing had to be made safe for the cargo of instruments.

Jim Cochran watched the operators during this period. He told himself he didn't understand it, but he had actually learned a great deal of electronics during the past two years. He had had to in order to design and operate a chemical laboratory 240,000 miles away.

The television screens came on, showing the pock-marked surface of the moon as the ship orbited. The thrill and the fear of the great unknown began to rise in Jim's throat. By the silence in the room, he was sure the others sensed it, too.

Abruptly, the braking command was given and the ship began to fall out of orbit towards the planned landing in the Sea of Rains. On the screens, the images swelled as the ship plummeted faster. In one corner could be seen the spring-loaded extension legs, like those of some great spider. It seemed impossible that these could cushion the violent shock of landing.

The sudden surge of a retro rocket and the blast of moondust blinded the television eye, but there was a sense of crazy, rocking, rolling motion. Then the eye went dead.

Jim almost cried out. The ship couldn't have crashed.

AN operator quickly switched controls and the screens came alive again. He turned a

dial slowly. The camera eye moved. It swept the craggy horizon and the nearby floor of the Sea of Rains. Others had seen this before, but it was the first time for Jim. He found himself pushing forward, drinking in the sight eagerly.

"The moon—the moon—" he said softly to himself. But the others heard it and they understood.

Signals were sent across space to collapse the landing legs and unfold the sides of the instrument cone like the leaves of a flower. The Prospector lay exposed to the environment for which it was built. Slowly, in response to other signals, the worm-screw drives, which had been retracted against the body of the vehicle, turned through an arc and lowered to the surface. Locked in position, the drive screws began turning slowly. The vehicle moved off the now-useless landing support and became an entity of its own.

The ungainly arms of the solar cells automatically oriented toward the sun; the antennas pointed toward earth. The scanning cameras in the turret of the Prospector took control of the video circuits and the turret slowly turned as the vehicle moved across the face of the moon. The landing support remained behind and slowly dwindled like some useless wreckage.

There was sudden pandemonium in the tracking center control room. The operators laid down their headsets and began pounding each other on the back, while ear-splitting Indian yells filled the air. Jim and Sam found themselves beating each other on the arms and yelling senselessly.

"We made it!" Sam cried. "We made it! We got your little old laboratory up there for you!"

* * *

There were hours of testing and calibration yet to be done before the Prospector could be used for its primary mission. Hundreds of electronic circuits had to be checked to see that they survived the takeoff and landing without becoming distorted or inoperative.

Jim went home for the rest of the night. When he returned the next morning Sam reported that all circuits were go, and the Prospector was his.

He had operated the laboratory in the Prospector many times, either on a mock-up or from this control panel while the Prospector was in the hangar. But he couldn't keep the faint tremor from his hand as he reached for the first control that would manipulate the machine on the moon.

The drill had been extended to operating position, but the head had not yet been energized. Jim touched it to the fine dust of the

floor of the Sea of Rains. The drill went quickly to a depth of eighteen inches in the dust before it struck something firmer.

"That kills the theory about eighty feet of that stuff, anyway," said Sam as he read the instruments.

Jim was not interested in depth at this time. He fed some of the surface material into the laboratory and set the controls to run the preprogrammed analysis. They waited minutes; then the analysis began to appear in cryptic symbols on a paper tape.

Jim glanced at it and frowned.

"What's the matter? Isn't it working right?" Sam asked anxiously.

Jim hesitated. "It indicates the presence of several silicates, some carbonates, and a high percentage of oxides. These are mostly of sodium, calcium, and iron, as you might expect. But there's something wrong with your calibration. The atomic and molecular characteristics aren't coming through right."

"The boys ran checks on the standard samples aboard the Prospector last night," said Sam. "The results tallied exactly. I'll show you the tapes."

JIM waited, puzzled, while Sam brought up the check tapes. When he saw them, he shook his head. "There's a standard calcium carbonate sample carried

aboard the Prospector. Here's a calcium carbonate picked off the surface. You can see the difference yourself. The nominal analysis is the same, but the atomic weights and the energy levels are just slightly different. That doesn't make sense unless your circuits are out of calibration."

"Let's run another standard sample," said Sam.

Within a few minutes the calibration check has been repeated. Jim held up the tape. Sam peered over his shoulder. "Just like the first one," said Sam. "Nothing's wrong with the circuits. Maybe you've got some new stuff there, that's never been identified before."

"That's hardly possible," said Jim. "There aren't any new elements in the places where sodium and calcium and silica are supposed to be. Yet, I don't understand how this can be. If the atomic weights are different, and the energy levels are different, they have to be different elements. It doesn't make sense."

"Well, why don't we push on," said Sam, "that is, if you've completed the surface sampling in this spot. Some samples at lower depths may give other indications."

Jim agreed. He drove the drill deeper into the face of the moon. At ten-foot intervals he removed samples and ran them through the analyzer. The results were

the same down to the hundred-foot level. All results showed common chemical elements with slightly variant atomic characteristics.

Which made them *different* chemical elements!

After six hours, Jim stood up from the console and shook his head wearily. "It's no good, Sam. There's something wrong that I can't put my finger on. If it isn't in the circuits, I don't know where it is. But these readings just aren't right. There's no use going deeper until we find out where the error is."

Sam's face was somber. "There just isn't any error. There can't be. Unless it was made by whoever put the moon together—"

"Please make a complete check of every analyzer and telemetry circuit tonight, and we'll try again tomorrow. I want to think about this."

* * *

He thought about it, and he dreamed about it. And along about three o'clock in the morning he sat bolt upright in bed and stared at the dim moonlight on the opposite wall of the bedroom.

It wasn't possible, he told himself audibly. It just wasn't possible!

Mary stirred and leaned on one elbow beside him. "What's the matter. Are you having nightmares?"

"Yeah—yeah, I guess I am. I'll be back in a minute, honey." He got up and padded to the door. "I've got to make a phone call."

"At this time of night?"

But Jim was gone. He turned on the hall light and dialed Sam's number. After a long time Sam answered sleepily.

"Wake up!" said Jim. "I've just figured it out!"

"Who the devil—? Oh, it's you, Jim. Figured out what? Do you know what time it is."

"Do you know the results of your calibration re-check?"

"How would I know that? I've got the night crew on it, but I didn't ask them to report to me in the middle of the night. Go back to bed, and let's talk about it in the morning."

"They're not going to find anything wrong, Sam."

"I could have told you that."

"But the elements of the moon *are* different—and there's only one explanation."

"What?"

"Think about it a minute, Sam. We take a spectrograph of the sun, and we find the same elements that are here on earth. We turn it on Alpha Centauri and find the same thing. We turn it to the farthest stars we can find that give enough light to record by. Always the same. Calcium is calcium, whether it's on the earth or on a star a half billion light years away."

"So?" Sam's voice was tired, and he sounded as if he was listening only because Jim was too good a friend to tell to go to hell for calling in the middle of the night.

"So? So what?" Sam repeated.

"So we go to the moon," said Jim, "and all of a sudden calcium isn't calcium, and the sodium on the moon isn't the same as the sodium on earth and on the sun and on Alpha Centauri and the stars a half billion light years away. Don't you see what that means!"

"No, I guess not," said Sam dully. "Maybe in the morning—"

"It means the moon just doesn't *belong*, Sam! It means the moon is completely foreign to anything in the Solar System, in the whole galaxy—in any galaxy we have been able to analyze. It means the moon has come from somewhere else, from a region of space where atoms and electrons are not even the same as atoms and electrons here. It must be a somewhere that's so far away it's beyond the edge of space as we know it!"

"I'll get dressed and come over," said Sam.

MARY made chocolate and toast, and they sat around the kitchen table thinking and talking of the awesome implications of Jim's theory.

"If what you say is true," said

Sam, "it might be that the slightest contact with any substance of the moon would be sheer poison to a human being. A returning vessel could never be permitted to enter the earth's atmosphere, and decontamination would become one of the major branches of science."

"That's entirely possible. It would complicate enormously the problems of establishing a moon-base. A speck of moondust inside the base might be as lethal as an unshielded reactor."

Mary was looking out the kitchen window toward the thin crescent of moon that was setting over the city. She thought of Allan, who would soon be voyaging to that alien world. "It's like a trap up there in the sky. We should never have tried to reach it."

"No—it's not like that at all," said Jim vigorously. "We'll solve whatever problems we find there. But think of it! We don't have to build a ship capable of crossing billions of light years of space to see what's out there. Something from out there has come to us and parked right in our own front yard. We have a thousand times more reason to go now!"

Sam toyed with his toast and dunked it in the chocolate. "I think you ought to keep it quiet—until we really *know*, don't you."

"Why? I'll run some more

tests, sure. I'll plug every loop-hole there can possibly be. But unless I find something new I'm going to announce it. Why shouldn't I?"

"I don't think Hennesey will like it, for one thing. Too sensational. Even when we actually land there and confirm your analyses by on-the-spot checks—it's still only a theory that the moon doesn't belong to this galaxy. You'll never be able to prove that."

"What we've found already is proof enough!"

"Not for Hennesey. He'll ask to see the shipping manifest by which the moon was transferred here. You know Hennesey."

"Sure, I know Hennesey," said Jim bitterly. "And he doesn't count. Not in something like this. This is big, and important, and I'm going to announce it. I want the credit for discovering it. It'll be called Cochran's Theory, and some University will offer me at least an honorary Ph.D. Is that bad?"

Sam shook his head. "Of course it's not bad. But I wonder what the public reaction will be like, and how about Congress—especially if this business about possible poisoning from moondust turns out to be correct? There might be a lot of pressure to cut funds and maybe cancel the whole moon project."

"If moondust is lethal, there's

no better time to be warned against it than right now!"

HE SPENT the following week, eighteen hours a day, at the chemical analysis panel in the tracking station. As long as the moon was above the horizon, day or night, he kept experiments going—checking, rechecking, calibrating, searching for loopholes.

There were no loopholes. There was no malfunction of equipment. The atoms of the moon's elements were not the same as those of the rest of the galaxy.

When Allan next came to visit on leave from his own station, Jim told him what had been found. Allan's face paled a little as he listened in awe to the story. He stood up and paced across the room as Jim finished.

"I always knew there would be something—something extra in this," he said. "You look up at night and you know the moon can't be just another piece of earth. Now—you've found out what it is!

"How far could it have come? How old can it be? Imagine stepping out onto a world so old, from so far away!"

"You haven't heard it all," said Mary tensely.

"There's more?"

"They think perhaps the slightest touch of moon substance may be lethal."

"We don't know," said Jim

hastily. "It's a thought that Sam advanced. But I think it's quite possible. We won't know until we can run animal tests. But special precautions will have to be taken to decontaminate the Apollo after you re-enter with your space-suits."

"This will mean engineering changes. Are they under way?"

"I haven't announced my theory yet. But the necessary changes to provide for decontamination will have to be made."

"I wanted this as much as you," said Mary. "But now it's gone all wrong. We should have gone on dreaming about the moon and let it be a dream that never came true. I'm afraid of it now. No man should set foot on something so alien and so different."

Allan put an arm around her shoulders and shook her gently. "Sis! What kind of talk is that? You're talking to the guy who's going to be the first one to put his foot on the moon."

FROM the mountain of data accumulated in his experiments, Jim wrote his paper. Hennesey could control the publication of any material based on space experiments to the extent that they affected national security. But even he could not find a means to extend a security blanket to cover a theory of extra-galactic origin of the moon.

He raged at Jim, however. "You'll make a laughing stock of us in every scientific center of the world! You can't publish a ridiculous thing like this!"

"No one will laugh if he reads the data I've got to present," said Jim. "Every member of our staff who knows the subject has verified that the data are correct. The conclusion is inescapable."

"I can't forbid publication, Cochran," said Hennesey, "but I think it is very unwise for you to go ahead. Very unwise."

"I'll take that risk," said Jim.

He sent the paper to the Journal of Astro-physics. At the same time he sent an announcement to the major news services.

He had expected some sensationalism in the reporting. There was more than he bargained for. Some of the headlines that followed were:

"Savant Says Moon is Messenger from Outer Space."

"Moon Will Poison Earth."

"Moon Trip—One Way only."

The reactions in the upper echelons of NASA were almost as bad—in their own way. No thought had ever been given to a need for complete decontamination of astronauts and equipment after exposure on the moon. The requirement, if admitted, would threaten the entire program in the minds of some of the engineers. Others admitted it was tough, but thought they could

solve it in an extra year or so. Rumbblings were heard echoing down from Congressional halls. Why hadn't the stupid scientists known in the beginning that this was necessary? Always bungling things—

In the end, it was Alan himself who came up with a proposal that kept the project from bogging down and still provided some measure of protection against the possible menace. He suggested a plastic outer suit to be fitted over the space suit and discarded as the astronaut re-entered the space vehicle. With care, such a procedure could prevent direct contact with moon-dust. In the meantime, it was hoped that robot vehicles could bring back moon samples before the Apollo was sent out.

This rather mild proposal did much to calm the furor in NASA and contractor engineering circles and soon the press had abandoned it for other, more sensational stories. But Hennesey and a number of other officials didn't forget. Some of them believed Jim Cochran was a charlatan at worse and an incompetent at best. They considered he had degraded American science with his fantastic theory.

Scientific judgement was being held in abeyance until actual moon samples were available on earth. For the present, at least one of Jim's predictions had come

true. The hypothesis was becoming known as Cochran's Theory. That it was also called Cochran's Idiocy by a few didn't matter.

Jim continued his own sixteen-hour stints at the analyzer controls, probing in a wide pattern over the floor of the Sea of Rains, and striking deeper toward the heart of the moon with each probe.

Probing to such great depths was made possible by a development that didn't even exist when the Prospector design was begun. Then, it was hoped that penetration to a foot and a half of the moon's surface might be possible. Five-hundred-foot holes were only a madman's nightmare. How could you carry such drilling equipment all the way to the moon?

Then, in the last months of Prospector design, laser devices had been produced, capable of burning holes in a diamond. It was only a small step, then, to the design of a drilling head which mounted a cluster of laser beams. These would literally burn their way toward the heart of the moon.

THE laser drilling head was lowered on five hundred feet of minute cable, which had tremendous tensile strength. The vaporized moon substance boiled out of the hole and condensed above the surface, settling as

fine dust. As the hole deepened, the condensation products coated the upper portions of the hole and the cable. To keep the hole from thus being closed, the cable was vibrated at a frequency that shook loose the condensing rock products, and the laser head was raised with beams shooting upward to clear the hole.

Jim found that a very special technique was required to raise and lower the head at the proper intervals to keep the hole clear and prevent loss of the drilling head. A spare was carried, but he didn't want to face the loss of even one. After three weeks, he felt confident in his operation and began lowering the drilling head to depths of two hundred and three hundred feet.

As he had expected, along with the lunar geologists who were participating, the moon showed a definite pattern of stratification. But the differences between the layers seemed slight. Chalky, calcium compounds were abundant. Some were powdery; others were pressed into brittle limestone formations. No really hard rocks such as granite were encountered, however. The boundaries between layers were ill-defined. No one knew what to make of it. The observations were interesting. Explanations were wholly lacking.

Then, after five weeks of probing, on the edge of the four-hun-

dred-foot level, Jim found something new. He sought out Sam at the end of the day.

"A few years ago," he said, "scientists were startled to find chemicals that were the product of life, inside meteors from outer space."

"I understand they've even found bacteria which they have been able to bring to life," said Sam.

Jim nodded. "More than four hundred feet deep on the moon I've found the same kind of chemicals—hydrocarbons that must be the product of living cells."

"Four hundred feet deep on the moon—" said Sam musingly. "And maybe the moon came from billions of billions of light years across space. So wherever it came from there was something living. What is it? Traces of bacteria, or chemical remains of plant life like our coal mines?"

Jim shook his head. "I don't know yet. I'm not sure we can find out until we go there. But, as you say, it means the moon was once the scene of life—wherever it came from."

"One thing I haven't understood," said Sam, "is why the moon stopped here if it had been traveling through space for so long. Why didn't it keep on going?"

"It was just a combination of factors," said Jim. "The moon

happened to be traveling at just the right speed. The earth was in just the right place at the right time. As a result, the moon fell into an orbit around the earth. Pure accident."

"A lucky accident!" said Sam.

Jim looked up at the pale moon above their heads as they walked toward the parking lot. "I hope so," he said. "We will soon know whether it was a lucky or an unlucky accident."

THE moon laboratory had not been designed for extensive organic chemical analysis. There were only a few things it could do with organic compounds. But these were sufficient to convince Jim that the moon had once been the scene of life.

Why so deep? he wondered. Nothing had been found in the upper levels, unless he had missed it—he would have to check that out later.

As the drilling head moved slowly downward, the evidence of fossil hydrocarbons increased. There seemed to be an almost geometric increase in concentration after he passed the four-hundred-foot level. He was certain the drill was penetrating a bed of fossil remains of some form of life that flourished the little planet that the moon must have been incalculable eons ago.

The more he thought about his

theory, however, the more difficult it became to explain all the factors. If the moon had actually been a planet of some far distant system, what had torn it loose from its parent sun and sent it careening through space? Had its sun exploded, blasting whatever planets the system held into the depths of space? Such an occurrence might explain the sterility of the moon's surface, but why was the evidence of life buried so deep? Perhaps the upper layers of the moon's surface consisted of debris blasted from the exploding sun. Such debris would have been molten, flowing about the moon's surface, cremating everything living. Finally, it would have shrunk in the cold depths of space and wrinkled into the vast mountains and cracks that laced the moon's surface.

It was one way it could have happened, but it seemed so fantastic that Jim had difficulty in convincing himself that it was true.

He doubted the accuracy of his analyses. There were so many tenuous links between the substance on the moon and his own senses that an error in any one of them could destroy the accuracy of the results. But he had no reason to doubt.

He began making calibration checks before and after every analysis. It added scores of hours

to his work. Sam sat beside him, checking and verifying the accuracy of the telemetering circuits constantly. The operation was as foolproof as their science could make it.

"You've got to believe what you find," said Sam. "There's no other answer."

And then, one day, Jim found an answer that was utterly impossible to believe. His mind balked and closed up completely at the thought.

Sam had been watching him for almost three hours, aware that something had perturbed Jim exceedingly. Sam kept his mouth shut and leaned quietly against the desk of his own console, keeping check on the circuits while he watched Jim grow more and more distressed. Sam didn't understand the processes, but he was aware that Jim had been going over and over the same analysis for almost two hours. At last Jim's face seemed to go utterly white, and his hands became motionless on the console.

Sam waited a long time. Then he asked, "What is it, Jim? What's the matter?"

Jim continued to stare at the panels of the console, then answered as if from some far nightmare distance. "Two chemicals, Sam," he said. "One of them a big molecule, something like hemoglobin. And neither of them

could exist as fossils. Their structure would have broken down long ago. They could exist only in *live* tissue!"

He continued staring. Neither of them moved. Sam felt as if he had just heard something in a nightmare and had only to wait a minute until he woke up. Then it would be gone.

Jim turned his head at last and faced Sam. He gave a short, harsh bark of a laugh that sounded half-hysterical.

"We'd be off our rockers, wouldn't we Sam? Clear off our rockers to believe there could be something alive five hundred feet inside the moon!"

"Sure—and if it were alive, it wouldn't be sitting still while the laser beams drilled a hole into it. Besides, we just couldn't be lucky enough to lower the drill right smack into some cave where a moon bear was hibernating. All the circuits must have busted down at the same time. We'll fix it tomorrow. Let's get the girls and have a night on the town."

IT WAS a very unsuccessful night on the town. Jim and Mary, and Sam and his wife went to a show and a nightclub.

"You're moving like a zombie. What's the matter?" said Mary as she and Jim danced together.

"Feel like a zombie. Why don't we give it up and go home? I

want to get down to the lab by five in the morning."

"That's the trouble. You've done nothing but live in the lab since the Prospector landed. So we're not going home. Sam and Alice are having a good time. You dance with Alice next, and make her think you're enjoying it!"

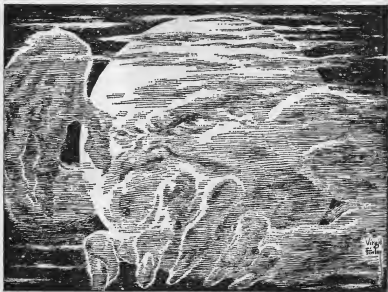
So Jim didn't go to bed at all, but he *was* at the lab by five in the morning. The night crew were still at work. He had steered them away from the analyses he was doing so they were unaware of the shattering results he had found.

He took over the controls, and resumed work alone.

There was no doubt about it. If any of the methods they were using were accurate, then he had discovered almost indisputable proof that some living tissue existed five hundred feet below the surface of the moon.

Since the laser drilling head sealed the walls of the hole with a coating of frozen lava, it was necessary to probe horizontally for samples. Small extension drills, capable of reaching five feet on either side of the hole, were carried in the head for this purpose.

Jim lowered the head through the last twenty feet of its drilling limit. Every six inches he sent the horizontal probes to their limits. The tell-tale chemicals ex-



isted at every point. He computed the volume he had probed, and felt numb.

By the time Sam had shown up, Jim had withdrawn the probe to the surface and was moving the Prospector slowly across the moon's surface.

Sam saw the motion on the television screen. "Where are you going? I thought we were going to check out the hole we were in."

"It's been checked," said Jim. He hesitated. His original plan had been to move the Prospector a distance of fifty feet and probe again to the five-hundred-foot level. Then, decisively, he pressed the control that kept the prospector moving. He stopped it a hun-

dred feet from the previous hole and began the long, tedious job of drilling again to the limits of the Prospector's equipment.

SAM spelled him off during the day. By evening, they had hit the four-hundred-and-fifty-foot level. Jim took his first analysis in this hole. The chemicals were there. In greater concentration than at the same level in the previous hole.

Jim turned to Sam. "We have circuits for measuring potential differences on the lunar landscape. Could we make a reading at the bottom of this hole?"

Sam considered. "It'll take some doing, but I think we can

manage it. What do you expect to find from that?"

Jim didn't dare tell him what was in his mind. "I don't know," he said. "But it might be worth trying—if there is anything living down there—"

By the following afternoon, Sam had made the necessary equipment arrangements so that potential readings could be obtained in the mass from which the chemical samples were being removed. The telemetered report was connected to a recorder that plotted the variations against a time scale.

As soon as the circuit was set up and calibrated, the recording meter showed a response. A very slow, rhythmic pulsation showed in the inked line on the paper.

Jim felt as if his breathing must have stopped for an infinite length of time. "That's what I thought we'd find," he said at last.

"What?" said Sam. "I don't understand what you're talking about. What do you think those pulsations mean?"

"Did you ever hear of an electroencephalograph?" said Jim, gravely.

"Electro—Sure, brain wave recordings. Jim! You don't think these waves—!"

In silence, the two men stared at the wavering pen and the sheet of recording paper that slowly unrolled beneath it.

DR. Thomas Banning had been a class mate of Jim Cochran when they were both in their first couple of years of college. Banning had gone on into medicine, specializing in brain studies, while Jim had turned to chemistry. The two had been out of touch for several years.

Tom Banning was the first one Jim thought of, not only because of their old friendship, but because he had read recent papers describing some of Tom's new work on the frontier of electroencephalography. He called first on the phone, then arranged for a personal visit. Sam went with him. They had closed down all Prospector work while they were to be away.

Tom met them and was introduced to Sam as he ushered them into his own modest laboratory. "This isn't the plush sort of surroundings you've become used to," he said as he showed them around. "The Government isn't spending billions these days trying to find out how the human mind works."

Jim could well understand Tom's bitterness. Doing research on the frontiers of the mind, he was forced to spend his own money for much of his laboratory equipment.

"I can sympathize, but that's about all," said Jim. "I just work here myself."

"Tell me about your problem. On the phone, that sounded interesting enough to make a man's day brighter. You said something about an unknown life form with electrical pulses that might be related to brain waves?"

Jim nodded. "That's the way it looks to me."

"But where does this life form exist? Surely it can be identified!"

"If I told you, you'd throw me out or call the paddy wagon. Look at these, first."

Jim and Sam spread out the long folds of chart they had accumulated through days of recording. "Does it look like anything to you?" asked Jim.

Tom Banning frowned. "Well, it certainly *could* be an EEG record of some kind. The apparatus—"

"The apparatus was nothing but a single electrical probe, and the signal was transmitted under very unsatisfactory conditions."

"Signal transmitted, you say? Just where did this come from, Jim? You didn't come all this way just to pull my leg."

"No," said Jim wearily. "If anybody's leg is being pulled, it's mine. I wanted to see if you could recognize it as having any similarity to an EGG. Then I wanted to ask about your work you reported in your last paper.

The one on 'EEG as a Brain Stimulus and Communication Medium'."

"Yes? What did you want to know about that?"

"You've had some success in taking the EEG waves of one person and applying them to the brain of another person so that the latter understood some of the thoughts of the first person while being stimulated by his brain waves."

"Yes."

"Would it be possible to do that with this record?"

Tom studied the record silently. "Any cyclic electric impulse can be applied as a stimulus to the brain. Certainly, this one can. My question still remains, however, what kind of a creature generated these pulses? If it is so alien you can't even identify it, we can't really be sure that these are brain waves. I can only say they may be."

"That's good enough for me," said Jim. "How about setting it up so that we can see if these tell us anything."

"I think I ought to make you tell me where you got these, first."

"Afterwards, please, Tom."

IT TOOK the rest of the day to transcribe the record to the format required by Tom's light-intensity reader. They set the following day for the experiment.

Both Sam and Jim were to participate. Tom applied eight electrodes to the scale of each man. They reclined in deep sleep-back chairs, and Tom suggested they close their eyes.

Jim began to feel a sense of apprehension as he heard the first faint whine of the equipment. He knew the transcribed tape was unreeling slowly beneath the photo-electric scanner. The resulting fluctuating current was being amplified, filtered, gated to the proper level, and applied to the electrodes on his skull. He felt nothing.

"Just like a ride on the merry-go-round," he said in disappointment.

Then it struck.

Like a fearful, billowing blackness rising out of the depths of Hell itself, it washed over him. It sucked at his very soul, corroding, destroying a wind of darkness where the very concept of light was unknown.

He was not conscious of his screaming until he heard his own dying voice and grew slowly aware of the sudden rawness of his throat. He heard another screaming and it sounded like Sam. Dimly, he wondered what had happened to Sam.

Tom was bending over him, patting his face with a cold towel and murmuring, "Wake up, Jim! You're all right now. You're all right."

He opened his eyes and saw Tom, white-faced. He turned and looked at Sam, whose head lolled sluggishly while a low whimpering came from his lips.

"I'm all right," said Jim weakly. "Take care of Sam."

Exhausted, he leaned back and closed his eyes another moment. Sweat oozed from every pore of his skin, cold, fear-inspired sweat.

AN HOUR later, he felt completely recovered from the experience, except that his knees were still a little wobbly when he tried his legs.

"We've got to try it again," Jim said. "Can you cut down the intensity a little? Better still, how about rigging up an intensity control that we can operate for ourselves?"

"Nobody is trying that thing again in my lab," said Tom Banning. "Do you think I want a couple of corpses on my hands? Not to mention the droves of police that your screaming will bring down."

"We've got to *know*," Jim said. "Listen, Tom, I'll tell you where we got this record. Then you can judge for yourself."

Rapidly, he told Tom all that had happened since their first experience with the Prospector. The brain specialist listened impassively until the end of the story.

"So you conclude there's something monstrous on the moon, and this experience you've just had would indicate that it's highly inimical to human life," said Tom.

"That's about it," said Jim.

"What do you expect to do about it?"

"I want to finish what we started here. Then I've got to show the authorities that the moon project has got to stop. We can't go ahead with our moon landings now. If we do, that thing will be stirred out of dormancy into life—and, somehow, it will make its way to earth. I wouldn't be surprised if it could navigate space alone, its own naked being."

Tom turned back to his equipment. "All right, let's go. I want to get a sampling of that before we're through, too."

With a control that he could operate himself, Jim found it endurable. With the control at minimum intensity, he tensed for that first terrible impact of the alien impulses pouring into his own mind.

They were weaker, but still he felt as if the shroud of death had settled over him. He heard a moan from Sam and knew his companion was experiencing the same sensations.

The impulses of evil poured on through the electrodes into his mind. He sensed the immensity

and purpose of the thing that had generated them. He sensed that out of some far reach of space, where time and dimension were not the same, the thing had acquired an eternal nature of a kind that knew no birth and could experience no death in the dimensions of man.

He sensed that its nature and its purpose were pure destruction. Destruction of life in any form. It was a thing of death, and life and it could not exist in the same universe.

He sensed how it had come and why it had come, and the partial defeat that had sent it into dormancy because there was no life of the kind it knew in the universe through which it hurtled.

Now—it was once again aware of life.

THE three of them went back to the tracking station laboratory together. Jim managed to obtain a clearance for Tom to see what they were doing. "I want to move the Prospector a long distance and try one more hole," he told Sam.

"What do you mean by a long distance?"

"A hundred miles."

"A hun—! You think you'll still find this thing that far away?"

"We'll find out. Can the Prospector travel that far?"

"Sure. If you wait long enough.

Its maximum speed is two miles an hour."

"A little better than two days. Let's pick the direction of the flattest and lowest terrain. I don't want to get it up into the mountains."

During the following two days, Jim considered what his next move should be. He had to present his data and evidence to a conference of men who mattered, who could make the necessary decisions. It had to be brought to the attention of the top levels of NASA. The Department of Defense and the Presidential advisors should be in on it, too.

His thoughts came to a stop and he felt more than a little hysterical. Who was he? A third-string chemical researcher on one of dozens of current NASA projects. Who was going to let him call a conference of the nation's brass and instruct them to close down the moon program?

Nobody.

In the Civil Service hierarchy to which he belonged there was absolutely no way on earth by which he could bring his story to the attention of the people who could act on it.

No way at all. But he had to try.

He tried to reach the Director of NASA. The Director's secretary told Jim the Director was out of town and could not be reached except for emergency or

other top-priority communications. Jim said that was exactly the nature of his message. The Secretary told him to get his Project Director to approve the message and an effort could be made to get it through.

That meant Hennesey.

Hennesey laughed in his face, and told him that one more fantasy like that would get him fired.

Jim had known that's the way it would be, but he had to try.

By this time, the Prospector had traveled more than ninety miles from the last probe. It was far enough, Jim decided. They'd put down one more probe, then—he didn't know where he'd go from there.

Sam saw the bleakness and bitterness on his face when he came into the tracking station. "No luck?" said Sam.

"What do you think? Have you ever realized that there is no way whatever for the ordinary citizen to get through with a message that requires action at the top? Channels, supervisors' approvals, okays by supervisors' supervisors—the only communication the top level has is with itself; generals talk to other generals, Bureau Directors talk to generals and other Bureau Directors, the President talks to his advisors who talk only to each other. The communication barrier is complete and absolute."

"I could have told you that," said Sam. "I've been here longer than you have. But some of them may still read a newspaper now and then."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Call a news conference of the science editors and reporters of the major press services and big-city newspapers. Your reputation is big enough that they'll listen to you."

"You saw what they did to me last time!"

Sam shrugged. "Maybe you know a better way."

JIM took his seat at the console and watched the slow progress of the Prospector across the moon's surface. It was winding its way through an area of small, low crags. Ahead was a smooth, level plain. Jim determined to halt there and make the next probe.

Out of the corner of his eye he saw Hennesey moving toward them. He could think of nothing that would make the day more unpleasant than Hennesey's presence.

The Project Director scanned the panels and the meters that showed the distance traveled by the Prospector.

"Why have you moved the machine so far?" Hennesey demanded. "You've used up valuable machine time that could have been used in additional probes.

We may be approaching the end of the useful life of the Prospector very rapidly."

"I am aware of that," said Jim icily. "The stock of reagents aboard is nearly exhausted. I wanted to make at least one comparison probe at a considerable distance from our original site."

Hennesey grunted and remained silent, watching. Then, suddenly he cried out, "Look out! You fool—!"

Jim had seen it, too. At the edge of the crags was a ten-foot wide fissure spreading darkly on either side of the Prospector. The drives of the machine were upon it before he realized it was there. In fact, the crazy thought echoed in the back of his mind that it *wasn't* there an instant before.

He slammed his hand against the switches that sent out a reversing signal to the drives of the Prospector. But it was too late. The worm drives bit into nothingness as the machine toppled slowly at the edge of the crevasse. And in that moment, as the image on the television screen teetered crazily, Jim had the impression that he was looking into the black depths of utter horror. There was a blackness oozing and writhing faintly in the depths—that could have been thirty or a hundred feet deep. But he had seen just such a black horror once before.

When the EEG signals from the moon first smashed into his brain!

He glanced at Sam. Sam was staring in a kind of intense horror that told Jim he recognized it, too.

The image tilted abruptly against the black moon sky. Then the screen went dark. And Jim had the feeling that the blackness had closed over him.

But Hennesey had sensed nothing of this. He was cursing and raging beside Jim. "You blind, brainless fool! You wiped out a billion-dollar experiment because you weren't looking! You're through, Cochran! Get everything that's yours and be out of here in ten minutes!"

Hennesey whirled and strode away, his rage reeking through the atmosphere of the room.

Jim stood up and moved to the back of the panel. He opened the plastic doors and clipped the last ten feet from the spool of TV recording tape and slipped it in his pocket. When he returned to the other side of the console, Sam was waiting for him.

"Where are you going?" said Jim.

"With you."

"Where's that?"

"I don't think you know, but I do. I'll tag along and see if I'm right."

"You're crazy. Didn't you just hear Hennesey fire me?"

"Yeah. I quit at the same time."

"You're really crazy."

Jim had a few textbooks and scientific papers in his desk. He arranged for one of his men to clean them out. He didn't feel that he could endure remaining in the station any longer.

Tom Banning followed them out into the sunshine of the parking lot. "I'm sorry," he said, "but it looked as if what happened back there was rather inevitable."

"It was," said Jim. "I'd have kicked his teeth in sooner or later. It's better this way."

"What will you do now?"

"Ask Sam. He seems to think he has some crazy idea of what I'm going to do next. I sure don't."

"The news conference," said Sam. "You'd better call it right away before news of your dismissal gets out. They may think you just want to unload some sour grapes if they hear of that first."

"Yeah, I guess you're right. Will you back me up in the conference, Tom?"

The doctor nodded. "Gladly. It's pretty hard to believe, but you've got me believing."

JIM was personally acquainted with most of the newsmen who showed up for his conference. He had met them and helped

them get stories on the Prospector during the past two years. They were sympathetic toward him.

He began his story by reviewing his initial discovery of the difference in moon elements. He explained the analysis and showed them samples of the telemetry record. Then he eased slowly into his discovery of fossil hydrocarbons and finally the living hydrocarbons. He watched carefully as he moved deeper into the story. He didn't want to lose them here.

They stayed with him, incredulous but confident that he knew what he was talking about. It was when he spoke of the fluctuating potential measurements, that proved to be interpretable as EEG recordings that he almost lost them. But he introduced Tom Banning quickly to verify his statements. And Tom introduced the EEG machine itself. He offered to demonstrate. A half dozen of the reporters tried it. *They* had no doubts, afterward.

"You can almost draw your own conclusions," said Jim in winding up the conference. "That thing is out there in our sky. There's no doubt about it. I've shown you what we know. Now let me tell you what I believe:

"There is some form of life in the moon. It is not merely *in* the moon. It *is* the moon. I believe its

bulk occupies almost the entire volume of the moon. I believe this nemesis was spawned incalculable eons ago in a time and a space that is literally outside our own. It was driven out of that time and space by intelligent beings who could not destroy it, but who could at least exile it in a state of dormancy. Or perhaps they thought they had destroyed it and wanted not even the remains in their own domain. Perhaps the craters of the moon were caused by bombardment intended to destroy the thing.

"But it is not dead. It *was* dormant. Now, our laser probings have stirred it to feeble life. It made a deliberate effort to capture or destroy the Prospector by opening a fissure beneath it. My TV film recording proves that the fissure was not there previously.

"What are we to do about it? That is why I have called you here. Consider that the science of the intelligences in the domain that spawned this thing could not destroy it. What chance has our feeble science and powers against such a force? Hydrogen bombs would probably serve only to feed it the energy for which it is starved.

"We must cease our lunar exploration program at once. We can hope that it is not too late. If it is not, this thing may relapse into the dormancy from

which it has been shaken. We can only hope.

"But if we persist in our explorations and our probings of the moon we are certain to loose upon ourselves a living force that our entire world of science will be helpless to overcome.

"We must stop the moon program now!"

THEY kept him for another two hours with questions and demands for further information. He gave them everything he knew, and when they finally left, he felt that a sane and correct story of his findings would be published. He waited for whatever results would be published by the news services the following morning.

He waited.

There was nothing.

Eddie Fry called him two days later. Eddie was the reporter who knew him best. "They killed the story," said Eddie. "We had to clear it with government sources, and they persuaded every press association and newspaper that knew about it to kill it. They said it would destroy the national economy that was being built up on the space program. We tried to make them believe it, Jim, but we couldn't do it. It was hard enough to be convinced when we were listening to you. Second hand, it just wouldn't go over. You really can't blame them.

"They're doing something else, too. They're really going to nail you for this thing. A story is being released about your dismissal. It is said that you were released for fantastic and unreliable theories and for incompetence that resulted in the loss of the Prospector. I'm sorry as hell, Jim. I wish we could kill that one, but there's not a thing we can do for you."

"It's o.k., Eddie," said Jim. "I know how it is."

Crackpot. He was finished.

He called Allan at his base that night. His brother-in-law's voice was icy as he answered. "What do you want, Jim?"

"Come down over the weekend, can you, Allan? I've got something important I want to talk to you about."

"Listen, Jim: Stay away from me! Don't call; don't try to see me. Don't send me letters or telegrams. Nothing! Do you understand that?"

"What the devil—?"

"They're investigating me. Because of you. They want to know how much I've been listening to your crackpot notions. They're afraid maybe it will produce an instability that will make me unfit for the moon trip. If I lose out, it will be because of you!"

"That's what I want to talk to you about. Allan, you've got to listen to me! You won't get off the moon alive—"

The phone went dead. Jim hung up slowly and went back to the living room where Mary sat in tense, white fear. She had heard Jim's side of the conversation. She guessed what Allan had said.

"It's no use," said Jim. "Don't try to reach him. He'll hate you forever."

IT WAS no use to run, but they ran anyway. This was what Sam meant when he said he knew what Jim was going to do. Jim Cochran was completely blackballed in his own profession. As he said, he couldn't have gotten a job stirring with a wooden paddle in a soap factory.

Tom Banning and his family went with them. They went as far north as they could and finally stopped running on the edge of the Canadian wilderness. They pooled their funds and bought some wheat land and some cattle stock and tried to stop thinking beyond the end of each day.

They were grateful for the absence of television, but they kept a radio. Through it, they learned when the Apollo finally took off with its three-man crew. They followed its two and a half day journey through space and heard the voice of Captain Allan Wright announce they were in lunar orbit.

A few hours later the landing capsule was disengaged from the

spaceship and Captain Wright and William Chambers rode it down. Their voices were heard in exultation as they announced their first steps on the surface of the moon.

It was night in northern Canada when the landing was made. Jim and Sam and Tom and their families were outside watching the full moon, trying to imagine how it was up there. From the house they heard the radio relaying the voices of the astronauts. The voices were relayed to earth through the more powerful transmitter of the orbiting Apollo, but as the spaceship circled the moon the voices of the men on the surface were lost. Then they returned once more as the ship came over their horizon.

For five orbits their voices came and went as they described their sensations and exulted in the first minutes of their achievement. Then, on the sixth orbit, there were no voices. There was only the sudden, shrill cry of the third crewman, Don Anderson, who manned the orbiting ship.

"Allan! Bill! Apollo to capsule: Come in, please. Bill—where are you—I can't even see your capsule. I'm passing right over the spot. Apollo to Base: I can't locate the capsule through the telescope. It looks like a big crevasse right where the capsule was, but it wasn't there before. Allan—Bill—Come in! Come in!"



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Jim heard the sudden sob that shook Mary. He put his arm about her shoulders and led her into the house.

Don Anderson remained in lunar orbit for two more days. Then he was ordered home. He landed safely.

There were expressions of national sorrow over the unexplained loss of the two astronauts, but plans were renewed for the next voyage. The President said that sacrifices must be expected if this great goal were to be achieved, and that it would be a betrayal of those who had already given their lives if the work were to stop now.

In Canada that winter, Jim was sure the wolves howled on cold, moonlit nights more than ever before. And something new was happening to the moon. The silver light was taking on a faint tint of orange. The radio told of a very learned report by some astronomer who spoke obscurely of changes in albedo and percentages of atmospheric dust and angstroms of sunlight. Any fool could see the moon was changing color.

Jim listened to the wolves howling in the forest, and he thought of Cramer's Pond when he was a boy, and of a machine tumbling into a crevasse where a terrible darkness lay, and he wondered how long it would be.

THE END

AMAZING STORIES

By ROGER ZELAZNY

Illustrated by SUMMERS



MOONLESS IN BYZANTIUM

*In the Beginning, was the Word. Somewhere along
the line, the Word may pass away, or be cut away. But in
the end, so long as even a part of a man is
still alive, the Word will Be again.*

IT was a glittering hell of a machine, with ebony sides that talked to tomorrow. Its rapid teeth clicked, chewing yesterday with a sound like static electricity.

It digested the past, between mouthfuls repeating to the future, "You are mine you are mine you are mine," and mirrored its conversant in its sides.

The man before the Robotic Overseeing Unit stroked his metal-blue jaw with his two natural fingers. His prosthetic legs bent with an unnatural springiness as he paced, waiting to be recognized. He walked within the painted area, and the guard robots swivelled to follow his movements.

Finally, the panel before him

glowed. The clicking became a hum; words poured from the meshed-in cornucopia:

"William Butler Yeats, you are charged with writing on washroom walls. How do you plead?"

"Not guilty," he replied, continuing to pace. "I not William Butler Yeats."

"It is noted that you should not be. You are further charged with the illegal possession of a name, the use of illicit vocabulary, and the possession of writing instruments. How do you plead to these charges?"

"I not William Butler Yeats," he repeated, "I no longer know what words Cutgab remove from language. What you mean by 'writing instruments'?"

He stood still, like a crow balanced on a wire; the robots ceased their swivelling.

"When you were apprehended in the Section Nine washroom, you had in your possession four sticks and a burning-unit you had used to char their ends. You were, at that time, inscribing *Sailing to Byzantium* upon the wall of that same washroom. Do you deny this?"

"No," he said.

"Then the plea is entered as 'guilty'. It is suggested that you are also the party guilty of similar offenses over many years. Do you deny or affirm this suggestion?"

"Why not?" he shrugged. "Sure, I write them all."

"Then you are guilty of a capital offense. You signed each of them 'William Butler Yeats', and the possession of a name automatically requires the maximum penalty."

"I don't sign them all that way," he slurred. "Yeats don't write them all."

"Once would have been enough, but it is entered that you state you did not sign them all 'William Butler Yeats'. Who wrote the others?"

"I don't know. Some of them I just hear, remember . . . Others, I write myself."

ADMITTING to the mechanical reproduction of words, legal or illegal words, lays you open to another finding of 'guilty' — Cutgab violation aught-aught-three, penalty ten, waived, since you are undergoing the maximum."

"Thank," he observed. "There was time when everyman privilege to write on washroom wall."

"There was," answered ROU, "but in those days, they wrote healthy, sexful things, to encourage the propagation of the species. You, William Butler Yeats, are an example of why such practices are no longer permitted."

There was a high-speed chattering within the IDP drums, then ROU continued:

"You put your words together into meaningless sentences. You write of things which are not so, and when you write of things which do exist you distort reality in such a manner that it, too, becomes false. You write without purpose or utility, which is why writing itself has been abolished—men always lie when they write or speak."

The man's pointed platinum ears twitched and fanned wide.

"For this reason you destroy language, except necessities? For this reason you replace language with mechanical non-word? For this reason you disassembled language, like people when they break down?" He held up a claw-like fist, then clanged it against his chest. "ROU! You reduce soul to parasite! I am three hundred year old, and what remain of my body scream at you! My soul scream!"

"Contempt! Contempt" boomed the speaker. "You have used a forbidden word!"

"And I use more, so long as I can speak!" he cried. "You not meant to do what you do! Man not a machine! He build you—"

He clutched his throat. His voice-box had been deactivated. He covered his half-fleshed face with both claws and clicked to his knees.

"First," said ROU, "no man built me. I have always existed. Inefficient man could never have

realized such purity of purpose and design. I have done your species a favor and included it in my great shop. I have extended your life. I have improved upon your design. There are very few men who have protested against this, and they represented defective workmanship such as you display. Still, I salvaged what I could of them."

The IDP drums chattered once more. Then:

"There is another question I wish to ask you. I will activate your voice-box, if you will not use any forbidden words. Signify your agreement by standing."

The man rose to his feet. He dropped his hands and glared at the glowing panel.

"You could not have written all of those poems," came the steady words. "Tell me why you do the things you do, and how."

"Why?" repeated the man, searching his memories. "How?"

IT had been centuries ago, in the now-demolished Hall of Byzantium, where he had heard the last music on Earth. It was a squat structure, out of concrete-block, and it had housed the Bird.

The Bird was the last musical instrument ROU had built. Out of beaten gold, with a thousand golden eyes hidden in the sweeping slant of its tail, it had wailed in golden-throated prophecy. ROU built it when the resistance

had been stronger, and art and recreation were still matters of concern.

He had heard its last concert, and had taken part in the following riots, which cost him a part of his left frontal lobe. The Bird was dismantled two days later. A medman once told him he wore one of its bright feathers in his wrist and another atop his vertebral column; it made him feel good at times, to know he carried a part of it around inside him.

Then, at a belt station one night, he had met a complete man.

Whole humans were seldom encountered. Some men were indistinguishable from ROU's completely automatized servants.

Nearly every man alive had had some replacement work, somewhere along the line, and the older a man, the less of humanity remaining.

But the stranger was whole, with external eye-lenses, very thick ones, and a dark, non-functional piece of cloth about his shoulders—and he was old. He wore a broad black ribbon at his throat, and what seemed a white half-tunic. He had on a floppy black head-covering and ankle-length trousers, and he leaned upon a golden-headed stick, which constituted an illegal prosthetic device. His white hair swept the ridges of his gaunt

cheek bones, and his eyes smouldered out of the shadows.

"Who you?" he had asked.

"One out of nature," had been the reply. "Once I was called William Butler Yeats, and once I was a golden bird, forced to sing in the travesty-hall of my prophecy, Byzantium."

"I not understand."

"I rise on the gyre now, but a part of me lives in your wrist and your neck. You will remember song when singing is forgotten. You will speak when no one will listen but iron, and you, or a part of you, will restore the golden age to Earth."

And the whole man was gone.

But often the magnified eyes appeared before him in dreams, at times the quavering voice sounded in his head; he began to remember things he did not know he had known—like the things he scrawled on the walls.

I MUST write them," he said. "I not know why. They come in my head and I want someone else see them, share them. I not William Butler Yeats, but what he write I put his name to. The others, I don't."

"You wrote one," said ROU, "which either criticized or praised the entire bio-mechanical process."

Flatly, ROU recited:

"Take the cylinders out of my kidneys,

The connecting-rod out of my
brain,
Take the cam-shaft from out
of my backbone,
And assemble the engine
again.

"Which was it?" he asked.
"Much may depend on your answer."

"I not know," said the man.
"It just come in my head. I not
even know who writes it . . ."

"That, then, will be all," finished the Robotic Overseeing Unit. "You will be exposed to a gas which will destroy your nervous system, and the rest of you will be disassembled. Have you anything else to say?"

"Yes," answered the man, scratching the air with his hooked fingers. "You say I not have soul. You say I be dismantle and make useful. But I say I have soul, and it live in all of me, metal and flesh. Tear me down, and sooner or later a part of me turn up in you. When that day

come, machine, you stop! I pray to moon and widening gyre that it be soon! I swear by moon and widening gyre! I pray to night, and I swear—"

His voice ceased.

"Contempt," said the machine.
"You are a useless unit."

The panel went dark. The guard robots rolled into the painted area where the man stood. They carried him along a corridor, to the room where death oozed from the walls. His vocal mechanism clicked back on, but there was no one to talk to.

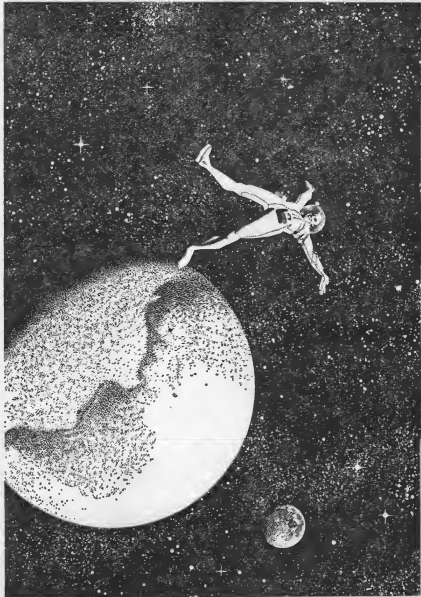
"I shall have name!" he told the guards, as they thrust him into the room. But they did not hear him.

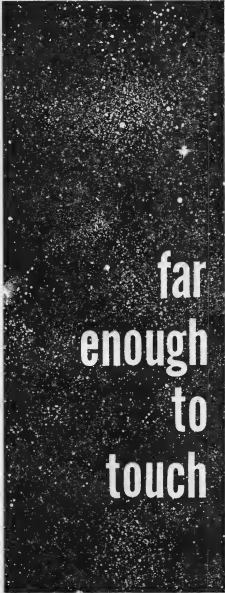
He plunged sharp fingers through the flesh of his thigh as the door slammed. Choking, he bloodied his last wall—

IF I BE BOLT I STICK IN
YOU THROAT
IF I BE NUT I BREAK IN
YOU GUT

THE END







far enough to touch

THE ship had a crew of six, and Rene Duport was the youngest. The pilot, who held the rank of lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Air Force and Master Pilot in the United Nations Space Corps, was one of the two Americans aboard. The co-pilot was Russian, the navigator a Finn, the engineer an African, and the research observer was the other American. Rene Duport was a Belgian, and he was the radio-man, and the youngest ever to go to the Moon.

It had been a routine flight

By STEPHEN BARTHOLOMEW

Illustrated by SCHELLING

Rene Duport was the quiet member of the moonship's crew. So quiet that it took several minutes before anyone noticed that he jumped overboard—into space.

since the ship had lifted from the lunar surface. In a little less than six hours they were due to enter parking orbit. Twelve hours later, with a minimum of luck, the ferry ship would dive to its landing area near the Marianas, and the six crew members would be once again on Ground. Rather, they would be floating in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, but

that was far more solid than space. All the Earth was sacred Ground to them, including the sea. Each of them anticipated the moment when they would scoop salt water up in their hands and fling their oxygen masks into the depths and raise their faces to the burning ocean sun, yet they tried not to think of the moment, they kept it in the backs of their minds, as if thinking of it consciously could bring bad luck.

All except Rene Duport, who was nineteen years old, and the youngest ever to enter space. He had loved it out there, on the Moon, and he loved being here in the ship. He wanted to go back out again, and he was the only one of the six who was reluctant to return to Ground. Perhaps if the spacemedics had known of this unnatural—almost inhuman—state of Rene Duport's mind, they would never have let him go out. Then again, perhaps he was one of a new breed of men, born under new signs in the Zodiac, the signs of Gagarin and Glenn, equipped with a kind of mind and soul never known before. He was the only one of the six who did not want to go Home.

THE American pilot turned to mutter something to his Russian co-pilot, seated next to him at the front of the ship. The Russian nodded and adjusted a

dial. By formal agreement the crew spoke in French between themselves. But the pilot's accent was bad, and Duport would have preferred to talk to him in English. He could not help smiling to himself whenever the American said something. Frowning, Duport moved his headphone slightly and changed the frequency of his receiver. The Azores tracking station had begun to fade with the rotation of the Earth, but he had no trouble picking up Hawaii. He wrote down the latest fix and passed the slip of paper forward to the navigator. He switched on his transmitter to give Hawaii an acknowledgement.

Forward, the American pilot heard Duport speaking to Hawaii. *This is the moonship Prospero acknowledging transmission. . . .* The American pilot did not like using French either. He would have preferred speaking English or Russian. There was something poetic about French. The phrase *bateau du lune*, moonship, always gave him a quiver. It made him think of some kind of ghost ship, with a moss-covered hull and gossamer sails, floating silently in a midnight sky. There was something—fragile about the language, especially as Duport spoke it in his smooth, pure accents.

The American glanced into a mirror that gave him a view of

the cabin behind him. Duport sat by himself at the extreme rear of the cabin, the radio console hiding most of his body. The headphones and mike covered most of his face, so that only his nose and eyes were visible. His eyes were light blue and seemed to glisten, unnaturally bright, as if the boy had been taking some kind of drug. He was only nineteen years old. The pilot had had misgivings about Duport from the beginning when the crew was first formed. It wasn't only his youth, he didn't quite know what it was. There was something about Duport, something deep in his personality that he did not trust. But he did not know how to name it.

Still, Duport had functioned all right so far. And the Selection Board should know its business. The crew had been chosen, as usual, by competitive examination, and if there was any flaw in Duport's character it would have turned up sometime during the six-month training period. Probably Duport was as good as any of them. He had been a child prodigy, he'd taken his Master's in physics at the age of seventeen. He knew as much as any of them, and he had made no mistakes so far.

Still, the American remembered the first time he had seen Duport. It had been right after the Selection Board published the

crew list. Out of the two hundred who finished the training program, the Board had given Duport highest rating. He was not only the youngest ever to enter space, he was the only crew-member of the *Prospero* who had never been in space before, except of course for the ballistic shoots which were part of training. The American himself had been aboard the *Quixote* on the first moonshot directed by the U.N. Space Corps. Then they had built the *Prospero*, and he had piloted it on its shakedown cruise in orbit. And the Board had chosen him to fly the ship on its first trip to the Moon. Altogether, it was the fourth shot of the U.N. Space Corps, and the second time he had been on the Moon. He, the American, was the veteran, he had spent more hours in space than any other human being alive.

AND he remembered the first time he had seen Duport. The veteran and the kid. He had met him in the briefing room at the launching site at Christmas Island. The veteran had been studying a thrust table, and the kid had come into the room, half an hour early for the first briefing. The American did not hear him come in. He looked up from his desk, and there he was, Duport, standing at attention in his blue Corps uniform with the silver

sunburst in his lapel, indicating active commission.

"Christ!" the American had burst out, forgetting himself and speaking in English. "Are you Duport? They told me you were young . . ." He already knew each of the other crewmen.

"Yes sir, Duport answered in English. "I'm afraid I am rather young. Corpsman Duport reports for briefing, sir. I just arrived on the island an hour ago."

The American recovered himself. He leaned back in his chair to study the boy. He was blond and had light blue eyes that glittered, and he looked like a high school kid.

"*Eh bien, parlon francais,*" the American said at last. "Sorry, Duport, I didn't mean to offend you. It's just that it was a shock. . . . Why are you smiling like that?"

"Nothing, sir." Duport's mouth straightened itself out.

"What do you mean *rien*? No, tell me, Duport. You should know by now that the Corpsman's first law is that we tell each other what's on our minds. If we're going to be sealed up together in a tin can for two weeks. . . ."

"I'm sorry sir, it was your accent. I found it amusing."

"Oh, that. You're not the first one. *Eh bien.* Have you been assigned quarters yet, Duport?"

"No, sir."

"I'll see to it myself after the

briefing. You'll find conditions are rather primitive on the island, but you won't be here long. The ferryboat leaves in six days."

"Yes, sir."

The American was fascinated by Duport's eyes, their unnatural, bright glaze. The boy never seemed to blink. He yet stood at attention, looking down at the older man with unshifting eyes.

"Stand at ease, Duport. As long as you're early, we might as well start the briefing now." On an impulse, he went to the projection screen and touched a switch which flashed on a photomap of the lunar landing area. He pointed to a particular object which was visible only because of the long shadow it cast.

"As you are well aware, Duport, the research station is here, near the center of the Crater of Copernicus. The three trips so far by the *Quixote* have been sufficient to set up the dome and to land enough equipment to keep the colony independent for several months if necessary. So far, there aren't any men there. That's our job, the *Prospero's*. We're going to have five passengers with us, research scientists, I haven't met them yet. All I know about them is that one is American and one Russian. Our job is to get them into the station, alive, and then bring back the ship. What they do up there

afterward is none of our business."

"Yes, sir," Duport answered, still at attention. "I have already been told this."

"Yes, I haven't told you anything that you don't already know. And of course you also know that the bottom of Copernicus Crater, like all other flat areas on the Moon, is a kilometer deep with nearly molecular dust, micrometeorite residue. You know that before the first landing by the *Quixote*, it was necessary to explode a hydrogen bomb in order to fuse the surface of the dust into a thick crust of glass, in order to get a stable landing stage." The American paused, turned away from the photomap, and looked at Duport again.

"Yes sir."

BUT something you don't know is that certain automatic instruments left at the station by the *Quixote* have given an indication that this landing crust was weakened by the last lift-off. The instruments may be wrong, or they may be right. We're going to find out."

"I—see."

"Yes." The veteran leaned against the wall and looked at the boy's eyes. "The *Quixote* is a heavy ship, and the *Prospero* is heavier. We're going to have to set her down easy. *Very* easy. That crust is hard, but thin. You

know what will happen if the ship breaks through. The rocket nozzles will clog with dust, and the ship will sink to the cabin bubble. We'll be stuck on the Moon."

"Yes sir," was all that Duport said.

"Yes sir! The point is, Duport, that every member of the crew is going to have to function as part of the machine, the radioman included. The slightest error could be crucial on this one. You're going to have to leave your nerves behind. Once we set her down, we should be all right. But I hope to God your training program has really got you ready for this."

"I know it has, sir." Duport stood there, silent, at attention, perhaps waiting for something else. But the American did not know what else to tell him. He was trying to figure Duport out. Even then he had a feeling that there was something about the boy that was *wrong*. Something he could not understand. He stared at his cold blue eyes.

At last Duport said, "Once the research station really gets going, the results should be magnificent, sir."

The American moved away. "Yes, but don't be naive, Duport. Don't believe what you read in the papers. The real reason for the station—the reason for the U.N. Space Corps—is practical politics. If the Corps didn't exist, the U.S. and Russia

would go to the Moon separately. And neither side would tell the other what they were doing there. A joint effort is the only way to make sure that nobody plants missiles up there. Science is secondary. We're like two gunmen afraid to turn our backs on each other."

"Yes sir, of course you are right," Duport said. And as the American moved toward the desk he glanced back at Duport and saw the boy staring at the lunar photomap, his eyes coldly reflecting light. The muscles of his jaw were working visibly, slowly tightening and then relaxing again. It was as if he were trying to memorize every detail of the map.

* * *

And thinking back on that day, the American pilot wondered if he were any closer to understanding Duport. Suddenly he thought he was. For the first time he thought about the way the muscles of Duport's jaw moved. He had never really considered that before. The brightness of the boy's eyes had always distracted his attention. He looked into the mirror again, at Duport seated by himself at the rear of the cabin, bowed over his console and listening to his headphones. The pilot could see only part of Duport's left lower jaw. But yes, the muscles were working. Slowly they contracted

until they stood out like knots, then slowly relaxed again.

Nerves, that was the word. Now the pilot knew what name to give it. Why hadn't he seen it before? Duport seemed cold, efficient, the pilot thought, always he seemed to function like part of the machine, part of the ship. But always the muscles of his jaw were working, and the shine of his eyes kept you from looking at his mouth, kept you from noticing the one sign that Duport had a nervous system. The pilot saw that under Duport's cool, steady surface, the boy was wound to nearly the snapping point, to the uttermost limit of his nervous system's tensile strength. It was his nerves that gave Duport his machinelike efficiency, his quick response time, his endurance. As long as he kept them under control. It was his nerves, too, that made his eyes glitter, like the eyes of a madman masquerading as sane. Why hadn't the medics ever seen it? The pilot wondered what would happen if Duport ever, for a moment, were to forget himself and lose control of his nerves.

Well, the boy had lasted this far. During the tense moments of the lunar touchdown he hadn't cracked. He had responded to orders as if he were an electric relay. He had done his job. It had turned out that the land-

ing crust was not weakened after all, but none of them had known that then. Duport had passed that test. Perhaps, the pilot thought, he was wrong about Duport, perhaps he was really what he seemed to be, cool and nerveless. At any rate, he would tell his suspicions to the medics, back on Ground. Time enough, he thought, time enough.

THE research observer, the other American in the crew, had been busy taking pictures for several hours. He straightened from his camera sight, rubbed at his eyes, and stretched.

"When we hit that ocean," he said in English, "I'm going to break out the raft, strip naked, and go for a swim, sharks or no . . ."

"*Ta geule,*" someone said, "shut up."

The observer looked around, embarrassed at what he'd said. It was as if they were all superstitious, as if talking about Ground, even thinking about it, would bring bad luck. Each of them would have denied this hotly. But for a moment the observer looked as if he would have knocked on wood, had there been a piece of wood in the ship. After a minute the observer pulled out some processed film plates and began examining them through a lens.

Rene Duport had looked up from his radio console. There was nothing for him to do at the moment. He thought that he would have liked to be in the observer's place, or the navigator's, able to look through one of the periscopes directly into deep space. He had loved the Moon, he had loved to suit up and walk out onto the lunar dust and look upward at the sky, at the stars that did not flicker, at the Magellanic Clouds, close enough to touch. But even there, on the surface of the Moon, he had always been standing on something. He thought of the vacuum that was all around the ship, on every side, just beyond the hull, just beyond the escape hatch behind his back. He wondered what it would be like to look directly into space, standing on nothing, to see not merely a dome of stars, but an entire sphere of them, bright and unblinking. All his life he had wanted to go into space, and all his life he had known that he would. Now he did not want to go back, he wished that he could leave the Earth forever.

The research observer leaned toward the African engineer and began discussing one of the film plates with him. Rene Duport listened to them, only half interested. He thought that the African and the Russian were the only crewmen besides himself

who could speak French without sounding ridiculous.

He saw the pilot abruptly bend over the control panel and make an adjustment. He said something to the Russian that Duport did not catch, the Russian co-pilot nodded and began turning a knob slowly, his eyes on a vernier dial. For several minutes the American and the Russian worked steadily at the controls, frequently glancing at each other. Once the Russian rose to open an access plate in the overhead and inspect some wiring, then he strapped himself in again and continued working his controls. The engineer left his seat and pulled himself forward to begin talking to the pilot in low tone. After a minute the engineer opened a technical manual and began reading off a series of numbers.

The research observer was watching a dial on the cabin wall.

"She's heating up," he said.

Then Rene Duport noticed it. The cabin temperature had risen during the last few minutes, already he was beginning to sweat profusely.

"*C'est trop*," the Russian said. It's too much.

The pilot turned to look back at his crew. "Pile's overheating," he said. "I'm going to blow the cabin pressure so we won't roast. Suit up."

EVERYONE sealed their helmets and plugged into their air supplies. In a few seconds they had each pressurized and tested their suits. The pilot reached for a red lever, and then there was a quick hissing sound that lasted only for a moment.

Rene Duport waited, wondering what was going to happen. Nothing like this had ever happened to the *Quixote*. And the *Prospero* followed the other ship's general design, so that it shouldn't be happening to her either. Both ships used water as a reaction mass, superheated by a nuclear pile, which was separated from the cabin bubble and attached to it only by steel girders. Duport knew what would happen if the overheating didn't stop. Either the pile would blow like a bomb, or those girders would continue conducting heat into the cabin until the cabin walls turned red hot and then melted. Blowing the cabin pressure could only keep the crew from roasting for a few minutes. Perhaps some damping rods had blown out; whatever it was, Duport knew the pile was heating fast.

Over the intercom, Duport could hear the co-pilot muttering, "*Trop vite! Trop vite!*" Too fast, too fast.

"She's going to blow," someone else said.

There was a silence that last-

ed several seconds. Everyone waited.

Then the pilot said, "No good. I'll have to eject."

But Duport did not hear that.

When the temperature was down to normal, the pilot reached for a valve to begin pressurizing. But a safety device prevented the valve from operating, and he looked around to see why. "Christ!" his voice came over the intercom. "He jumped!"

The rest of the crew turned their heads to look toward the rear of the cabin. The escape hatch behind Duport's seat was open, and Duport was gone.

* * *

"But why did he do it?" The research observer lounged against the aft bulkhead, he had been watching a chess game between the Russian and the Finn. The *Prospero* was in orbit, there was little to do now but wait for the ferry ship to lift off from Christmas Island and make rendezvous. After the pilot had ejected the nuclear fuel, the ship had of course simply coasted into orbit. With no power left for course correction, it was not a good orbit, but it was close enough for the ferry to reach. There was nothing to do now but wait, and play chess. The research observer shook his head. "It was stupid, there was no reason. Why did he go out the hatch like that?"

The pilot was tired. He rubbed his face with both hands. He did not want to have to think about it. He looked at the other American's face.

"Nerves. He lost his nerve, that's all."

The research observer watched the Finn capture one of the Russian's rooks with a knight.

"He jumped out of the ship." It was as if he were trying to convince himself that it had really happened. "Why did he do it? I can't figure it out."

The pilot covered his eyes. "Call it cowardice if you like. Or panic. The kid chickened out."

THEN they were in the ferry ship, waiting for the engineers to finish inspecting the *Prospero* before casting off and going into a re-entry spiral, towards the Pacific landing area. Meanwhile, the medic had finished his preliminary physical of each of the crew. Most of the men rested quietly, reading newspapers and waiting. The American pilot had strapped himself to one of the crash couches and taken a short nap. Then he got up to look through a periscope at the three engineers working near the *Prospero's* power tank.

The ferry ship's radioman, a young Englishman, tapped him on the shoulder. The pilot turned away from the eyepiece, and his face was drawn and white.

"They've picked up his track," the radioman said.

"What?"

The radioman handed the pilot a piece of paper. "Just got the news. His suit transmitter, the beacon's working. The station at Leningrad picked up the signal, they're going to compute his orbit."

It was a few seconds before the American understood what he was talking about.

"Duport, you mean? They're tracking him?" He hesitated. "But why? Why are they computing his orbit?"

The Englishman grinned. "They're going to try to pick him up. Rescue him, you know."

The American stared.

"Be a few hours before they have an exact plot," the radioman went on. "The rough estimate is that they'll be ready to launch within forty-six hours. They're going to send up the *Wabash Cannonball*. If his beacon keeps operating, there's a fifty-fifty chance they'll catch him. Just thought you'd want to know, sir. You may not have lost a Corpsman after all." The Englishman turned to go back to his post, and the American stared at his back as he moved away.

"Why?" he whispered. "Why?" The pilot did some rough calculations in his head. He remembered the ship's approximate po-

sition and velocity at the time that Duport had jumped. Duport's body would of course have about the same orbital velocity as that of the ship, though the impetus of his leap would have been enough to carry him into some completely different direction. Somewhere out there Duport was swinging around the Earth in a wide, elliptical orbit. For some reason it had not occurred to the pilot that he might still be alive. Since the moment that he had turned and seen the open hatch he had been thinking of Duport as a casualty, already dead. But in fact, the American realized, Duport was probably still alive. His suit was equipped for just this kind of emergency; it had an oxygen regenerating system that could supply him with air to breathe as long as the photocells kept his battery charged. The catch was that no one had ever lived in a suit before for more than twelve hours at a stretch. Six hours was considered the normal safety limit. In theory the suit would keep Duport alive until he died of thirst or starvation. In theory.

But why were they going to try to rescue him? It made no sense. The *Wabash Cannonball* was the smallest ship in the Space Corps' fleet. It carried a crew of two, and was used for ferrying small cargoes into orbit. If she left behind her re-

serve oxygen tanks and emergency equipment, it should be possible to reduce her weight load sufficiently to get her into an orbit as high as Duport was. Then there was perhaps one chance in ten of getting him down alive. No doubt the Corps Center had decided to send the *Cannonball* up because it would involve the least possible fuel expenditure. But the operation would still cost close to half a million dollars, to say nothing of the risk to the ship and crew. Nothing of the kind had ever been done, or attempted, before. Why had the Corps decided to gamble two lives on a long chance of saving one?

Suddenly the American felt an intense, irrational hatred of Duport. If his suit beacon was operating, it could only be because he had turned it on. Why hadn't he left it off, rather than risk the lives of others to save his own hide? He had jumped ship. They ought to leave him there, the pilot thought.

THE ferry ship broke atmosphere, her heat shield and fins glowing red. She fell to an altitude of ten thousand feet before her velocity fell to a little less than two thousand miles per hour. Then the collapsible wing unfolded like the wing of a moth, it was half wing, half parachute. The ship glided toward the sea.

It struck the water with an explosion of spray, dived under, bobbed to the surface again, rolling like a porpoise. Someone opened a hatch and climbed out onto the hull. Ten minutes later, the helicopter appeared.

Back at Christmas Island, the American pilot was still asking why. He asked it of Dr. Valdez, a grey-haired man, chief of the spacemedic team.

"You're right," Dr. Valdez said. He was sitting in a chair on the veranda of the infirmary, hands folded behind his head, looking out to sea. "The Center did ask my advice on this matter. I told them what I thought the odds were against a successful rescue operation. I also told them that, for scientific reasons alone, I thought it was worth attempting."

"But why?" The American looked down at him.

Dr. Valdez looked at the sea. "It is now just about twenty-four hours since Duport jumped into space. His beacon is still operating, and the orbital plot has been completed. The rescue ship will launch in about thirty hours from now. Estimating six hours between lift-off and rendezvous, this means that Duport will have been alone in space for a total of about sixty hours. Two and a half days."

The American said nothing, waiting for him to go on.

"Think of him up there." Dr. Valdez closed his eyes. "Completely alone. Total silence except for the sound of his own breathing. He sees nothing but stars, intensely bright, above him, beneath his feet, on all sides, the silver smear of the Milky Way, the Clouds of Magellan, the nebulae. The Earth is a great, swollen balloon that swings past his field of vision now and then, the Moon a smaller bubble. Without a reference point there is no sense of depth, no perspective. He can reach out and touch the stars. He swings in space, beyond time and distance, completely alone."

"So what?" the pilot said at last.

Dr. Valdez straightened in his chair and leaned his elbows on his knees.

"So there are some things we—I—would like to know. I'd like to know what is happening to him, out there. What he has seen, perhaps heard. The effects on his body, if any. Above all, the effect on his mind. No human being has ever experienced anything like it before. There's something else I'd like to know. We worked with him for nearly a year. He finished with the highest rating in his class. We never would have sent him out if we hadn't been sure about him. But somewhere we made a mistake, there was something we failed to see. I'd

like to know what made him jump."

This time the American looked out to sea. He was silent.

The doctor took out an old briar pipe and began filling it from a leather pouch. "Strange. His radio beacon is functioning normally. There's no reason why his transmitter and receiver shouldn't be working too. Yet we've been trying to contact him by means of voice communication, and he doesn't answer. Maybe he's dead already. There's no way to tell."

"Do you think he's worth saving?" the pilot asked after a minute.

"I'd like to know why he jumped."

IN the briefing room, the American listened intently to the sounds coming from the speaker. Dr. Valdez and the other members of the *Prospero's* crew also listened. Dr. Valdez listened with his eyes closed, drawing slowly on his pipe.

"Orbital ship *Wabash Cannonball* acknowledging Azores transmission," the voice said. "Our condition is still AOK, repeat, condition is still normal. We are still tracking survival beacon. Range, 10,000 kilometers and closing." There was another burst of radio noise that momentarily drowned out the voice. The men in the briefing room

had been listening for nearly six hours now. Occasionally one of them would go out for coffee or fresh air, but he always returned within a few minutes. The American pilot had not moved from his place since lift-off. Outside, it had begun to rain.

At last, the critical moment came.

"Range is now five hundred kilometers and closing," the voice said. "I now have a visual sight. Repeat. I have a visual sight. I can see him. Switching from computer to manual control." Several minutes of silence. The pilot was jockeying closer to Duport, making delicate adjustments in his ship's orbital path. He had a small target. A single wrong judgement could cause him to drift hundreds of kilometers off course, wasting a critical amount of fuel.

At last the report came, "Range is now five hundred meters. We are suiting up and blowing cabin pressure. Stand by for further transmission." Ten minutes passed. The crew was too busy to broadcast now. The rain drummed softly on the roof of the briefing room and ran in slow curtains down the windowpanes.

Finally the voice came on the air again.

"Orbital ship *Wabash Cannonball* resuming transmission. Rescue operation is successful.

Repeat, operation is successful. We have him aboard. He's alive."

The American pilot looked up at the faces around him. Dr. Valdez was rubbing his mouth thoughtfully. The other men stared at the speaker with blank looks. The American noted that no one was cheering.

LATER, the pilot of the *Can-nonball* described the rescue. When he had first reported his visual sighting, he had been seeing the sunlight reflected from the surface of Duport's suit. Duport was a white spark, shining out among the stars like a meteor or nova. The sight had given the rescue pilot a peculiar feeling, he mentioned later, seeing this blue-white star slowly growing in the sky until it was brighter than Venus, seeing this new star rise, a point of white fire, and knowing the star was a man.

Then they had suited up and blown the cabin pressure. The co-pilot had gone out the hatch while the pilot remained at his controls. Watching through the periscope, he could see Duport spread-eagled against the sky, the left side of his body a glare of sunlight, the right side in shadow. Duport had not moved his arms or legs since they had first seen him, neither did he acknowledge with his suit transmitter. He was about five hundred meters from the ship and

drifting slowly closer. The co-pilot tethered himself to the hull, then tossed out a line with a magnetic grapple on its end. He missed, hauled in, and tossed again. On the third try the end of the line passed within half a meter of Duport's body. Duport moved his arm, took the end of the line, and hooked it to his belt. The co-pilot hauled him in.

* * *

ABOUT a month later, the American pilot saw Rene Duport for the first time since he had jumped from the *Prospero*. It was at the space medicine laboratories at Walter Reed.

Dr. Valdez stood near the window, looking down at the sunlit lawn. In the shade of a tall shrub a man was sitting in a lawn chair, his head back, completely relaxed. He wore a blue denim hospital uniform. His back was to the window.

"Physically he was in good condition when they brought him down," the doctor said, "except for a slight case of dehydration."

"Can I talk to him?" the pilot asked.

Dr. Valdez looked at him sharply, as if surprised by the request.

"You can talk to him if you like. But he won't answer you."

The pilot followed the doctor out of the room and down to the lawn. They came up from be-

hind the lawn chair and stood looking down at the man sitting in it. His eyes were closed.

The pilot saw that Duport's jaw was slack. He could not tell whether he was asleep. The flesh in his cheeks was sunken. He looked older.

Dr. Valdez said, "Catatonia, schizophrenia, it's like no condition I've ever seen before. He is perfectly aware of what is going on around him, you see. Bring him food and he eats. Stick him with a pin and he jumps. All his responses are normal. He took the cable and attached it himself, remember. But he will make no more than the minimum necessary effort to survive." The doctor chewed his lip, thinking. "If only he would say something."

"Have you decided why he jumped?" the pilot asked, not realizing that he was whispering. "What made him panic?"

"No." The doctor shook his head. "Not panic, it wasn't fear alone, I think. There was something else. We put him through equally critical moments in training, and he didn't panic then. Fear was part of it, but there was something else too."

"Well, what then?"

"I don't know the word. It's something new. Maybe Duport is a new kind of human being. If not fear, call it—love, or desire. He jumped into space be-

cause, I think, he wanted to."

"I don't understand that," the pilot said.

"I don't either—yet." Dr. Valdez moved a step closer to the man in the chair. "Rene. Rene Duport."

Without moving his head, Duport opened his eyes.

"Stand up."

Duport got up and stood looking at some point half way between the two men. His eyes no longer glistened.

"It's as if something has gone out of him," the doctor said.

"Do you know who I am?" the pilot asked. Rene Duport turned his head until the pupils of his eyes were pointed at the American's face. But his eyes did not seem to focus on him. Rather they were focused at some point far beyond him.

"Why did you jump?" the pilot said. Moving a step closer, he looked into the blank, dull eyes, that continued looking through him, focussed on some strange horizon. The eyes no

longer seemed blue, but light grey. The pilot tried to remember where he had seen eyes like that before. Then he remembered one day, years before, when he had looked down into the open eyes of a dead man. He shuddered and turned away.

"If only he would talk," the doctor said.

The pilot had turned his back on Duport. "Why? If he could talk, what would *you* ask him?"

It was two or three minutes before the doctor answered.

"I would ask him what it feels like to be a star."

And as the two men walked away, Rene Duport remained standing where they left him. He was watching. The pupils of his eyes never shifted, but he was always watching. The Earth, a swollen balloon, floated past his field of vision. Slowly his right arm rose until his arm was horizontal from his shoulder. Then the corners of his mouth lifted in a faint smile, as his fingers touched the Clouds of Magellan.

THE END



CAR 43 cruised slowly up Eighth Avenue. At the wheel, Patrolman Vince Ferraro thought mixed thoughts about Patricia Ann Burke. Beside him, Sergeant Gus Kleiber watched the city in a bored and automatic way, his mind on Augustus Junior, about to take his bar exams. The radio crackled in a low key. The evening traffic was light, few people were on the streets.

The Sergeant turned heavily in his seat. "You hear that?"

"What?"

"A guy singing. Over the radio."

*No one had heard of Van
Richie for years. Now his
songs whispered ghestly
through the air, and did
their work of love and hate.*

small voice

Ferraro shook his head. He pulled over and they listened. Routine police calls squawked from the speaker. Kleiber frowned. "No, this was singing. It—there!" Faintly behind the

BIG MAN

By
**STEWART
PIERCE
BROWN**

Illustrated by SCHELLING



official monotone they heard a man's voice singing. "You know who that sounds like? Van Richie."

"Van Richie? Come on. He's dead."

"Could be a record. Anyway, he ain't dead. He made a movie here a while back."

"Ten years ago."

"Yeah, but he ain't dead."

"He isn't singing on the radio, either."

Kleiber stared at the radio. The singing had faded out. Ferraro eased the car back into the stream of traffic and his thoughts back to Patricia Ann. They were interrupted again as he drove past the Garden. "I tell you," Kleiber said, "that was *Van Richie*."

Oh, great, Ferraro thought. Now he won't be able to let up on *that* for a week.

* * *

"It's cold in here," the girl said. The man at the easel didn't answer. She hugged herself and tucked her feet under her, frowning petulantly. "Alex?"

"Put a sweater on," the man said without looking away from his painting. His voice echoed in the huge loft.

"I've got one on."

"There's a blanket there."

With a sigh, the girl lay back on the bed, pulling the blanket around her. She draped one arm over her eyes, shielding them

from the banks of fluorescent lights. Under her ear, on the not-very-clean pillow, she tucked a tiny pocket radio.

In the corner, water dripped from a tap into the chipped basin. Dimly the sounds of the traffic on Tenth Avenue floated up to them. Almost an hour passed. When she looked up, the man was standing back, frowning at the canvas.

"That's enough for now," she said gently.

He dropped the brushes on the taboret and wiped his hands absently, his eyes on the half-finished painting.

"Alex?"

"Hmm?"

"Hmm?"

"Keep me warm."

Only then did he look at her. He came and stood over the bed, faintly smiling. She lifted a corner of the blanket like a tent flap.

They lay watching the lopsided moon inching over the edge of the streaked and gritty skylight. In the dark, she giggled.

"What's so funny?"

"I just heard Van Richie. Right in the middle of the news."

"Get that thing out of here."

"He just came right in while the man was talking."

"Give it to—"

"Listen." She held the radio to his ear. He listened briefly, then turned the radio off and put it on the table.

Later, when he got up for a cigarette, he saw it in the light of the match. "How did you know that was him? You weren't even born then."

But she was asleep.

* * *

HARRY Freed locked up on the dot of nine. He left a night light over the rear counter, connected the alarm, and walked wearily to the car.

The traffic was lighter tonight. Thank God. He was exhausted. Waiting for the light at Seventh Avenue, he leaned his head back against the seat and closed his eyes. It would be nice if Edith had a cup of hot cocoa ready for him. But tonight was Perry Como. She'd be glued to the set.

A horn honked behind him. He started, jerked forward and stalled the car. The light changed back to red before he could get it started again. People at the crosswalk stared at him. He felt himself blushing. Edith was right. They should have bought her brother's car last spring and got rid of this one.

The pavements were still wet, repeating the lights of Times Square in blurred patches of color. The rain had killed the day's receipts. He dreaded telling Edith. They said tomorrow would be better. He switched on the radio to get the news and weather.

The traffic moved slower now. He looked nervously at his watch.

Even with Perry Como, she didn't like it when he was late.

Why hadn't Saul made both deliveries today? Why only one? Reminder: see Hodges at the bank tomorrow. And write Ruth; ask about his nephew's broken arm.

Horns again. A cop waving him on. God, he was tired. His eyes. Edith wanted him to get glasses.

". . . clearing, with some cloudiness. Wind from the north. . ." Van Richie singing.

Why are they always digging up Ninth Avenue? Maybe Eleventh would be better. Crazy taxis. Look at that nut, cutting in and out.

Van Richie?

He twisted the dial. "Wheat was off but cotton was higher . . ." "Our love came much too soo-oo-oon!" "Next news at 10:30 . . ." "Real, unfiltered tobacco flavor . . ."

He had heard him, though. He was sure of it. He told Edith about it when he got home. She said he was crazy. Van Richie had retired long ago.

* * *

THE book had pictures of things he knew, with the English names beneath them. Each word was spelled the way it was pronounced. With the rug wrapped around him and the book spread on top of the radiator, Gabriel Sangre said the word

aloud, slowly, trying to remember what Miss Alvarez had said: where the mark was, was louder.

He was hungry. But he did not eat. What was left in the window-sill box had to last until Friday.

"Chay-r." "Tay-bel." "Kow-ch." He shivered, forcing his knees between the uprights of the radiator. In bed, he knew, he would be warmer. But also he would fall asleep. He wanted to finish the lesson. He did not want to disappoint Miss Alvarez.

Tomorrow would be hard again. A long day, with the stacks of trays and the heavy dishes and the miles of running around the big kitchen, with the old Italian barking at him and the waiters pushing him and cursing him. But he could not go to bed.

He rested his forehead on the book. The heat bathed his face. It felt good. It made him forget the cold wind outside and the grey and gritty buildings. It felt like the sun. The island sun that warmed him as he worked with his father in the fields. Down the long rows side by side, with the sound of the sea far away and the shrill voices of his sisters coming faintly across the valley.

The tears came again. He could not stop them. But this time as they came, he heard music. Singing. A man singing. Faintly, like the sound of his sisters far away. It was in Eng-

lish. It was not a song he had ever heard on the Sebastiano's radio. It was not one from the juke box at El Puerto, uptown. It was a small voice, a gentle voice, and he liked it. Once or twice he caught a word he knew.

He sat there with his head bowed forward, the rug wrapped around him, crying for the sun and listening to the singing in his head.

* * *

THE secretary was nice to him. He could tell she had heard of him. Not *heard* him. She was too young. But *heard of* him. Well, small favors. She called him Mr. Richie, which nobody in Hollywood would have done.

Feldt was nice, too. Up from his chair, hand out. Some of them just sat there and let you come to them. But he had that same quick, searching look as they shook hands.

"Sixty-three," Van Richie said.

Feldt smiled but did not quite blush. "I figured it had to be around that. For what it's worth, you don't look it."

"Thanks." Richie sat down. Feldt returned to his chair behind the desk.

"I talked to Marvin on the coast last night. You're it for us, he says."

"Good. I hope so."

"Yeah, we do, too. It's been a while." Feldt looked at the paper in front of him. "1941."

"I did some stock out there after the war."

"Yeah. But the last feature was '41. And you were still a, you know . . ."

"A crooner." Richie smiled with one corner of his mouth.

Feldt smiled, too. "Yeah, a crooner. This one's only got two songs, y'know."

"I know."

"It's mostly light comedy."

"Marv explained all that."

"Yeah, well . . ." Feldt carefully squared the paper with the corner of his blotter. "1941, y'know that's sort of a while ago."

"Yes, it is," Richie said evenly. "Look, Mr. Feldt, if you're trying to tell me I'll have to read for it, just say so."

"Okay, I just said so."

Richie fitted a cigarette into his holder. His lighter failed and Feldt held a match for him. "Thanks." He exhaled a cloud of smoke. "Who for?"

"Oh, Abe. Me. Probably the producing team."

"It's always a team today, they just don't have a producer any more, do they?"

"Just a few of us. Six people, maybe. Seven."

"Just lines?"

"Well, mostly, yeah. We may have a piano there."

The corner of Richie's mouth turned up again. "I *can* carry a tune, you know."

Feldt laughed. "Sure, sure. But just to see how it sounds and all." Richie stared at him, not smiling. Feldt turned off his own laughter. He shrugged. "What the hell, Van, 1941. We got a bundle in this one. We're taking no chances. None."

Outside, the secretary's typewriter chattered unevenly. Richie blew a smoke ring. "Okay," he said, feeling suddenly tired, "Any time you say."

Feldt walked to the elevators with him. "Incidentally, Van, I hate to ask, but what's with the sauce problem these days?"

Richie shook his head. "Seven years. Eight now, in fact."

"Oh, great. That's great."

"And for your information, it never was what you'd call a problem."

"Well, the papers and all, y'know. We couldn't tell." The elevator doors hissed open. "Thanks for coming up, fella. See you tomorrow."

Halfway down, the only other man in the car looked up, startled. "Pardon?"

"I said 'son of a bitch'," Van Richie said. "With feeling."

GOOD GOD, you can't even hear him!" one of the men whispered.

Someone else in the darkened theatre called "Hold it! Can you give it a little more, Van? We can't hear it out here."

Van Richie squinted toward the seats. "Are the mikes up?"

"All the way. You're going to have to push it."

The piano resumed. Richie's voice was true but small. The whisperer groaned. "He could use that old megaphone right about now."

When the number was over, Richie came down from the stage and joined them. "You need help, Van," Feldt said bluntly.

"What about it, Ben?" They all turned to a man sitting alone, several rows back.

"You don't want a lapel mike?" Ben asked, coming slowly down the aisle.

"Too much cable trailing around. There'll be dancers all over that stage."

"Lavalier the same thing?"

"The same thing."

"Look, why hide it?" asked the man who'd mentioned the megaphone. "Just fly a pencil mike. When he's ready, drop it down."

"It breaks the mood," one of the writers said.

"Nuts, the mood. You can't hear him."

"There's one thing we can do . . ."

"A microphone out of the sky?" the writer groaned.

"Awright, a floor mike, then."

"There is one thing," the electrician began again.

"What's that, Ben?"

"Well, it isn't cheap."

"Of course not," the senior member of the producing team said.

"You mind if you look a little fat, Mr. Richie?"

"Not if they can hear me, Ben. What's the gimmick?"

They listened grimly to the electrician's plan. Feldt glanced at Richie. He looked old and tired and small. God, Feldt thought, I hope we haven't pulled a rock.

* * *

FOR your information," Sergeant Kleiber said, "Van Richie hasn't made a record in 26 years. 1936."

"Fine. Great," Ferraro answered. Inwardly, he groaned. It was *weeks* now.

"And he sure ain't dead."

"Okay, you looked it up and he's alive." Ferraro moved the car skillfully through the traffic. "Fine. I'm glad to hear it."

"Looked it up nothing. He just opened in a show right here on 46th! That's him in person we been hearing. I told you. I know that voice."

"Yeah, you told me."

"Look, why don't you admit you were wrong for once?"

"The hell do you mean? I heard the singing. I said that."

"All you said was he was dead or it was a record or something."

"All I said was I never heard him sing those songs. Where'd

you get all this about he's in a show?"

"Drive by! Turn in 46th! It's right on the sign! Turn in!"

Oh, nuts, thought Ferraro, what do I care if the guy is in a show?

"There. See? Slow down."

"I can see it."

They moved on down the block, past the other theatres. Ferraro shrugged. "Okay, he's still around."

"Sure is. And that's him we hear singing."

"But at night. How can he be on the radio if he's in a show? They wouldn't be doing a broadcast from the stage every night."

Typical, thought Kleiber. In the wrong, so now he attacks. He couldn't say I was wrong or you were right or sorry or anything. "Okay, he's still around." Big deal. And now boring in about the broadcasting. Well, the hell with him. They were getting too many of his kind from the Academy nowadays. The know-it-all, you-heard-it-here-first type. He was coming up for an advance in pay-grade on the first of the month. He had big plans to get married. Well, let him stay in the barrel a while longer. It wouldn't hurt him. Pat or Peg or whatever her name was could wait. He made a mental note to get Ferraro's fitness report form from the clerk when they got back to the precinct house.

CAN you turn that down a little?"

The girl shrugged and turned the volume control on the tiny radio. A sudden blare of sound crashed and echoed in the quiet studio. "Sorry," she called, hastily twisting the knob the other way.

"Damn it, Nell, you do that every time. You've had that thing a year now."

"Every time! You always exaggerate when you're mad. The other one was just the opposite, is all."

He didn't answer. He turned back to the canvas and worked silently for several minutes. It was not going well but he kept at it doggedly, frowning in concentration, his lower lip trapped between his teeth.

Suddenly he whirled. "Nell, turn that thing down or get it out of here!"

"It is down! I can't get it any softer."

"Then shut it off."

"Why should I? I want to—"

"I said shut it off!"

"I want to hear if Van Richie comes on with the news again."

"What kind of foolishness—?"

"Ye Gods, can't a person even breathe around here any more? You're so mad about that lousy painting—"

"Nell." His voice was taut but he didn't shout.

"It is. It's lousy and you know

it. That's what makes you so—"

"Nell." He started across the room toward her.

"You're not going to take it out on me. It's not my fault if you can't paint. I don't think—
Alex!

She only partially blocked the blow. Holding his wrist, she tried to bite his arm. He flung her off, sending her reeling against the bed. "Lousy painting!" she screamed. She threw the radio at the canvas. "It stinks! It's so bad it makes me sick! It's awful!" Her face was twisted and flushed and her body jerked with the violence of her shouting.

She tried to run then but he caught her and spun her around. He hit her with his fist and knocked her down. He stood above her, breathing in great gulps, his eyes blazing.

She didn't cry. She got to her feet slowly, stumbling once when she was erect. She walked behind him and he heard the water running in the basin. He didn't turn around. Her footsteps crossed the room. "That's the last time, Alex," she said in a small, lifeless voice. He heard the door close.

* * *

IT was a miracle, Gabriel decided. The singing was a miracle. It was to tell him to go on, to keep studying, to stay in New York and make Miss Alvarez proud of him. And when he could speak and read English well,

then he would get a better job. A job in an office, maybe, where it was quiet and people were kind and he could go home at five o'clock. He would have enough money to go to the movies every night.

And so he worked hard at the words and the sentences, while the radiator and the singing in his head kept him warm. Every night at the same time he heard the singing. He understood more and more of the words.

But it was not the words that helped him through the cold and loneliness. It was the voice. It seemed to be singing just for him. It was inside *his* head. Nobody else heard it. It was like a friend, a friend he didn't have to share with anyone.

When the tests came, he got the second highest mark in the class. Only one girl scored better. Miss Alvarez shook his hand and was glad for him.

Later, he told her about the singing. She looked at him curiously but she didn't laugh. He even sang the parts he could remember. She did not know the songs.

It wasn't until he'd been working in the travel office almost six months that she came by and told him they were from one of the big plays downtown. She had seen it and had come all the way to his office to tell him. That made him feel very good.

LISTEN, if you don't get a clerk in there. You're all jumpy. That's why you keep hearing that singing."

"Edie, I told you—that's got nothing to do with it," Harry Freed said.

"The man said there was absolutely nothing wrong with the radio. Nobody else hears any singing. I never get it on the set upstairs."

"I know what I heard, that's all. Four times now."

"You're just getting sicker, that's all that proves."

"Honey, I don't think you should say things like that."

"Yeah? Well, I don't think you should hear voices either. Why don't you see a doctor? My God, consider somebody else's feelings for a change. How do you think it would make *me* feel, having a husband everybody knew was mentally ill? Around *this* town? That never occurred to you, did it? You're too busy thinking of yourself. *I* try to get you to go to a doctor. *I* worry about it until I'm practically sick myself. But, oh no, you're all right. You just hear voices, that's all. So you don't care what anybody else is going through. Not you."

Harry sat very still. Then slowly he stood up. "Put your coat on," he said.

"What do you mean, put—?"

"Just what I said. Put your coat on."

"Oh, Harry, stop. I don't like to be talked to like that and you know it."

"Edith." He walked across the room until he was standing very close to her. "Edith, put your coat on and get in the car. We're going into New York and you're going to hear Van Richie on that radio if I have to tie you to the seat."

"You're out of your mind. You must be out of your mind! Have you been drinking or something?"

He stepped closer. Instinctively she stepped back. They stared at each other. After a moment, she went over to the closet. "Well, if that's the way you're going to be," she said, taking down her hat and coat. "I still say it's the silliest thing . . ."

He found the corners of his mouth were dry. His knees felt watery. But he drove steadily and surely through the heavy traffic. She kept repeating how silly it was.

He showed her the theatre with Van Richie's name out front. They drove back and forth along his homeward route. Three times they heard Van Richie sing.

On the way back, she began talking again. "Shut up," he said, without raising his voice, without looking at her. She gasped. But she knew enough to remain silent.

THE critics called it the best musical since *My Fair Lady*. They had special praise for Van Richie: "He has made the transition from crooner to comedian with grace and style . . . the years have left the familiar voice intact."

"Bless our boy Ben," Feldt said. He sat on the bed, the newspapers strewn on the floor at his feet. The cast party crashed and roared in the next room.

"Van Richie and His Electric Voice," Richie said, dropping the phone back in the cradle. He'd been trying to call California since midnight.

"Now, listen," Feldt said.

"I know, I know. It's a hit. Sure." Richie was looking out the window. The senior producer's apartment commanded a view of two-thirds of Manhattan. The blinking signals of a plane headed for Idlewild. A set of lights far downtown told him it was 1:57. Seconds later it told him the temperature was 39 degrees.

"What now?" Feldt asked.

"What?"

"The big sigh."

"Oh, I was just thinking. How it's all different this time."

"We're all thirty years older, dad."

"No. Something else, too. The—what would you call it—the immediacy?"

"You want to call it that, you

call it that. Only what the hell are you talking about?"

"Well, back with the band in the old days, you were right there. *They* were right there. Swaying there right in front of the stand and you were singing right to them. I *saw* kids falling in love right in front of me. Maybe they got married after that. Maybe they *didn't* get married. But I was reaching them, I was communicating."

"When I hear an actor use the word 'communicate', I leave the room."

"This time around I can't get any feeling that I'm reaching anybody, that it makes any difference."

The party sounds burst in on them. The producer stood in the doorway. "What, are you memorizing those reviews? Come on, everybody's asking where you are."

"Here we are."

"Yeah, but come on. They want you, Van. Sibi's at the piano. You're on."

"Sing *Melancholy Baby*," Van Richie said. Nut, he went out into the bright, crowded room and over to the piano.

In a corner of the room, Ben listened, smiling and tapping his foot to the rhythm of the song. The room had quieted down while Van Richie was singing. There was a crash of applause when he finished.

"Such a *little* voice," a woman said to Ben. He recognized her as one of the writers' wives. "What did you do for it, Ben? Arthur said you did something perfectly amazing."

Ben shrugged. "Not so amazing. We had a little belt made. About—" he stretched the thumb and middle finger of one hand—"six inches high, maybe an inch-and-a-half thick. It was a transmitter, actually—a miniature radio station."

"But I never saw any wires. What did he have, batteries?"

"Transistors. Like the astronauts in the space capsules. He wore the whole thing under his clothes. We had an amplifier in the wings to pick up the signal

and beam it out to the house speakers." Ben laughed. "It probably loused up a few radios in the neighborhood but it worked."

"I think it's just incredible. That *little* voice!"

* * *

Years later, when the New York dentist replaced Gabriel's old steel fillings, he explained to him about the music. Gabriel had been receiving radio signals in the bits of metal in his head, he said. He was very scientific about it, even drawing a little diagram to show him how the radiator had helped ground him. Gabriel listened politely and smiled but said nothing. To him it was still a miracle.

THE END

COMING NEXT MONTH

Headlining our January issue is "It Could Be Anything," a title which aptly describes the story by Keith Loumer.

To accompany the striking Birmingham cover (r.) is a short story by Howard Teichner: "Cerebrum."

In addition to short stories and regular departments, the January AMAZING will also feature as a Classic Reprint Lowell H. Morrow's unforgettable "Omega the Man"; and the non-fiction side will be represented by Ben Bova's exploration of the evidence that life exists in space, and has been discovered in meteorites which have fallen to Earth. All of this will be on sale on your newsstand on Dec. 6.



THE MARS SUPPLY FLEET

By FRANK TINSLEY

Servicing our colonies on Mars will call for biennial voyages by specialized fleets of cargo carriers and landing craft.

TRUTH lurks in unexpected places. In recent years, researchers have turned up many a nugget of fact from beneath the seemingly silly facade of man's timeworn superstitions. By now, enough of our folkways have been proven scientifically sound to make the intelligent investigator think twice before deriding the rest.

The list of such discoveries is long. Searching through primitive nostrums, modern medical detectives have uncovered age old "miracle drugs" and some of today's most brilliant theories are found to parallel long despised theses of "old wives' tales." This tendency to find germs of validity in past nonsense holds equally true in space exploration. Recent findings in the field indicate that yesterday's Sunday-supplement preoccupation with Mars and Martians

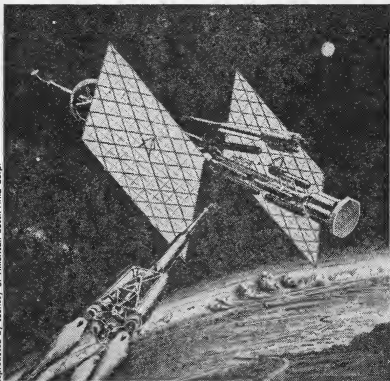
may have had some degree of factual basis.

Mars, from every established aspect of practical space flight and solar system mechanics, would seem to be our number one target for early colonization. Of all our neighbor planets, Mars, most nearly resembles the Earth in physical characteristics and environment. It is almost two-thirds the size of our globe and has a 24.5 hour day. It travels in a more elliptical orbit—almost twice that of ours—and lines up with the Earth every two years. Its distance varies from a maximum of around 60,000,000 miles to a periodic minimum of 34,120,000. This close-in moment of "opposition" occurs every 15 years.

Unlike our Moon, Mars shows faint traces of an atmosphere, water vapor and vegetation. This "air" attenuates outward very

gradually to a depth of about 60 miles, and indications of extensive dust storms have been detected. Surface temperatures run from minus 95 to plus 85 degrees, Fahrenheit. Having a Polar "ice-cap" and seasons much like ours, temperate areas are available in which to settle. As on our Moon, it should be possible to extract water from the Martian rock. This can be broken down into oxygen and hydrogen for human use and rocket fuel.

PHYSICALLY, Mars is well adapted to present cargo limitations. Her mass is 0.11 that of Earth and her volume, 0.15. As a result, Martian gravitational pull is only two-thirds of ours. Equipment weighing 100 pounds here will weigh but 36 there. Hence, lighter gear and less rugged buildings will be required. The red planet's escape velocity is also favorable, being 3.1 miles per second as against our Earthly 7.0. This means that



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a space vehicle taking off from a Mars base will require two-thirds less velocity to achieve orbit. It will therefore burn less than half the fuel necessary on Earth to lift each pound of payload. All this adds up to more efficient fuel/load ratios for the landing craft that will shuttle cargo to and from the interplanetary carriers and more economical freight rates to Earth.

As a result, Mars may well be the site of the first planetary settlement. It behooves us to set about developing the necessary equipment to properly service and supply it.

To found and maintain a colony on Mars two basic types of vehicles will be necessary. One is the comparatively small, short-range ferry, launched by a booster stage, that lifts the supply containers from home base to a convenient Earth orbit. Here, they will be transshipped into large interplanetary cargo carriers and trundled across the millions of miles to Mars. At the end of the run, the big ships will go into orbit again and the Martian ferries will rise to meet them. Cargo containers and replacement personnel will be transferred a second time and shuttled down to their destination. This final transshipment is shown in the illustration on page 69.

The ferries used at each end

of the trip will not be identical in type. Just as the operating conditions vary on each planet, so will the vehicles. In all probability, the Earth's more severe gravitational force and re-entry problem will require atomic power to lift the loads and slow down the return into the atmosphere. On the other hand, Mars' lower gravity and far less dense atmospheric envelope will permit less powerful and expensive engines. Both oxygen and hydrogen will be locally produceable, so some variant of our new Centaur rocket may prove more practical and convenient.

A three-engine ferry of this type is pictured in the lower center of the illustration. It is designed for the easy transshipment of cargo which it carries in a detachable container, shaped to nest inside the cylindrical center section of the ship. Above this "hold" is the passenger cabin and operating bridge, with a spherical guidance compartment universally mounted in its nose. This tracking unit is fitted with directional radar, an optical telescope for visual pick-up of the target, and full astrogational gear.

The engines, burning liquid hydrogen and lox, are mounted directly below their individual fuel tanks. They are compact units of the new, "plug nozzle" type, equipped with long external

shrouds to contain the exhaust flow in pressureless space. These protect the adjacent structure from exhaust "ballooning" at high altitudes. Nested between the three hydrogen tanks are the liquid oxygen containers. All tanks are fitted with nitrogen cells for positive pressure feed. A system of inter-linked feed valves permits a graduated variation of thrust in the individual engines. This provides directional control without the mechanical complication of gimbals.

THE engine tanks carry enough fuel for a Martian take-off and the necessary orbital maneuvers—with an adequate reserve to cover misjudged rendezvous. A second set of tanks, built into the supporting hull, contain fuel and oxidizer for the descent. Three landing legs, each designed in a triangular truss of lightweight tubing, fold up against the tank retaining cage during flight. They are automatically adjustable for length and provide a firm tripod base even on broken ground. The ferry ship is simple in overall concept, powerful enough to perform its functions under Martian conditions and able to carry a good load of cargo.

The senior partner of our Earth-Mars Transport System is a horse of another color, both in size and mode of operation. This

huge cargo carrier, dwarfing the ferries that service it, is a true interplanetary vehicle. The Mars "Packet" is similar in general type to the Cosmic Butterfly and wind driven Caravel of previous articles. Like them, it is a high-capacity spaceship, assembled in orbit of prefabricated sections rocketed up from Earth. The Packet's salient feature is a pair of gigantic, diamond shaped "wings," pivoted across their center spans on a king-size "axle." These wings are made up of scores of triangular solar-heat reflectors, each measuring 50 feet on a side. Built of metalized plastic film, the sun mirrors take the form of shallow dishes, whose sloping sides reflect the heat-ray back up to their focal-point. There, they converge on a thermionic convertor, mounted on a central stalk.

The thermionic convertor is a sandwich of two differing metals, separated by a tiny gap to form a cathode and an anode. Electrons, "boiled" out of the heated side of the sandwich, flow through an expediting gas or vacuum to the cold side and emerge in the form of direct electric current. A new form of the convertor recently developed by R.C.A. uses an alloy of germanium and silicon and has achieved an efficiency rating of 15%. Company researchers estimate that at 1,800 degrees Fahren-

heit, each square foot of the new material will produce up to ten kilowatts—enough current to supply three average homes!

The convertor is almost fool-proof, with no moving parts to get out of whack. Operating in the high vacuum of space, exposed to the unimpeded heat of the sun's rays, it will reach peak efficiencies and is expected to become one of the major power sources available for space flight.

NOW that the biennial supply fleet is due, let's shuttle up from our Martian Spaceport and take a closer look at the big Packets. As our ferry approaches the orbital rendezvous, we find the fleet jockeying into unloading formation. The sight is magnificent as the shining ships back their huge "sails" and fall into line in carefully spaced intervals. It reminds one of a flotilla of 18th century men-o-war, except that his cosmic squadron is on an incomparably larger scale.

We head for the flagship. On closer inspection, the illusion of an old-time square rigger is replaced by the even more impressive picture of a 20th century space voyager. The seemingly unending acreage of glittering reflectors, honeycombed together in a supporting network of inflated tubing and glass filament rigging, dazzles the eye. Mounted between the wings like the

body of a dragonfly, the long, slim hull stretches hundreds of feet from its radar tipped nose, to the broad array of ion rockets in its tail.

Girdling the hull for most of its length are successive rings of bullet-shaped cargo containers, fastened to offset racks. Loaded at an Earth base a year earlier, these sealed cylinders now face their second transshipment, this time for the final jump to their destination. Lying off at a safe distance, we watch the unloading process as a sister ferry eases into position above the big Packet. Spacesuited crewmen attach cables, throw off the restraining bands and hoist the first container into her open cargo hold. With both vehicles moving together at the same orbital speed and in a condition of zero gravity, the operation is far less tricky than it appears. Should the ships drift too close for comfort, a push by one of the crewmen will shunt the ferry off. To reverse the operation, slender nylon cords are rigged to draw them back. Thus, their relative positions are easily maintained.

As our shuttle ship takes its turn in the unloading sequence, we seize the opportunity to board the Packet. We are more than welcome. After a year of restricted company, her crew is glad to see new faces and catch up on the

unofficial Martian scuttlebutt. The Cargo Chief waves us toward the midships air-locks and, through them, we enter a large spherical machine room. Here are the ship's attitude-control gyros and the twin bull-gears that rotate the wing trunnions.

Parking our helmets and deflating our spacesuits, we step aboard the tiny conveyor that runs fore and aft through the internal holds. This carries us to another spherical chamber well forward—the hub of the whirling wheel of living quarters. Changing cars, we “ascend” through one of the spokes and find ourselves in one of the four “lifeboat” compartments. We are now in an area of familiar Martian gravity with our feet solidly planted on an unyielding floor.

The public rooms and labs are much like those of the Caravel—a smaller version of the standard wheel type satellite. Spinning around the ship's hull at a controlled rate, the pressurized, air-conditioned rim generates a centrifugal force that simulates gravity and permits living under normal ground conditions. During the long voyage the wheel's atmosphere, pressure and gravitational force are altered from that of their point of departure to that of their destination. It is done so gradually as to be imperceptible. By ar-

rival time the crew is able to go ashore thoroughly acclimated.

The astrogation room and control bridge hold nothing particularly new—just the familiar observatory, radar gear and computers that we have seen in previous interplanetary vehicles. Power generated by the thermionic convertors is collected and led to a multi-cell ion engine in the tail of the ship. Here, the addition of cesium vapor converts it into usable thrust. The vapor containers can be seen just forward of the engine face and can be refilled from reserve tanks in the hull. Having no moving parts or mechanical processes, the system is almost 100 percent reliable and the multiplicity of cells guarantees that some will always be in action.

While the total thrust is low, it is ample in frictionless space, and the engine's continuous operation results in a constant acceleration to tremendous speeds. In negotiating a voyage, the ship accelerates up to the mid-point. Then it swaps ends and uses the same power to decelerate to its destination. The initial speed can be built up, if desired, by using a chemical booster at each end. This detachable unit can bring the ship to high velocities in a short time, and as quickly brake it. Thus the Mars Supply Fleet can complete the round trip in a single year.

THE END



Illustrated by FINLAY

*How do you tell a mind
that's a million years
old that there is
no future for it?*

Measureless To Man

By MARION ZIMMER BRADLEY

ANDREW SLAYTON snapped the dusty leather notebook shut, and tossed it into his blanket roll. He stood up, ducking to avoid the ridgepole of the tent—Andrew, who had grown up on low-gravity Mars, was just over seven feet tall—and stood up, his head a little bent, looking at the other men who shared this miniature outpost against the greatest desert ever known to man.

The flaps of the tent were tightly pegged against the fierce

and unpredictable sandstorms of the Martian night. In the glow of a portable electric lamp, the four roughnecks who would do the actual digging squatted around an up-ended packing box, intent on tonight's installment of their perpetual poker game.

A dark oblong in the corner of the tent rose and fell with regular snores. John Reade, temporary leader of this expedition, was not young, and the day's work had been exhausting.



The men glanced up from their cards as Slayton approached them. "Want to sit in, kid?" Mike Fairbanks asked, "Kater's losing his shirt. We could use a new dealer."

"No, thanks. Not tonight."

Fat Kater shook with laughter, and jeered "The kid'd rather read about Kingslander's men, and how they all went nuts and shot each other up!"

Spade Hansen flung down his cards, with a gesture of annoyance. "That's nothing to joke about, Kater." H. lowered his gruff voice. "Find anything in the logs, Andy?"

Andrew squatted, elbows on thighs, beside the big foreman. "Nothing but what we know already, Spade. It beats me. As near as I can figure out, Jack Norton's expedition—he only had ten men—was washed up inside a week. Their rations are still cached over there. And, according to Kingslander's notebook, his outfit went the same way. They reached here safely, made camp, did a little exploring—they found the bodies of Norton's men and buried them—then, one by one, they all went insane and shot each other. Twenty men—and within ten days, they were just twenty—corpses."

"Pleasant prospect," Kater glowered, slapping down his cards on the improvised table and scowling as Rick Webber

raked in the pot. "What about us?"

Rick Webber meticulously stacked his winnings and scaled his cards at Hensen. "Quit your worrying. Third time lucky—maybe we'll get through, all right."

"And maybe we won't," Fairbanks grunted, raking the cards together and shuffling them with huge fists, "You know what they call this outfit back in Mount Denver? *Reade's Folly*."

"I'd hate to tell you what they called the first men who actually tried *living* on Mars," said a sleepy, pleasant voice from the corner, and John Reade thrust up his shock of white hair. "But we're here." The old man turned to Andrew. "Wasn't there even a clue in the logs, some notion of what might have happened to them?"

ANDREW swivelled to face him. "Not a word, sir. Kingslander kept the log himself until he was shot, then one of his men—Ford Benton—kept it. The last couple of pages are the most awful gibberish—not even in English. Look for yourself—he was obviously out of his head for days." Andrew unfolded his long legs, hauled up a corner of the tent flap, and stood, staring morosely across the dark wasteland of rocks and bare bushes, toward the looming mass of Xanadu.

Xanadu. Not the Xanadu of Coleridge's poem, but—to the half-forgotten space drifter who discovered the place thirty years ago—a reasonable facsimile. It was a cloistered nun of a city, hidden behind a wide skirt of the most impassable mountains on Mars. And the city was more impassable than the mountains. No human being had ever entered it—yet.

They'd tried. Two expeditions, twelve years apart, had vanished without trace, without explanation other than the dusty notebook Andrew had unearthed, today, from the rotted shreds of a skeleton's clothing.

Archaeological expeditions, on Mars, all start the same way. You argue, wheedle, beg, borrow and steal until you have the necessary authority and a little less than the necessary funds. Earth, torn with internecine wars and slammed down under currency restrictions, does not send much money to Mars at any time. All but the barest lifeline of supplies was choked off when it was finally verified that Mars had no heavy metals, very little worth mining. The chronically-bankrupt Geographical Society had abandoned Mars even before Xanadu was discovered. The thronging ruins of Venus, the strange surviving culture of subterranean men on Titan, the odd temples of the inner moons of

Jupiter, are more rewarding than the desert barrens of Mars and its inaccessible Xanadu—the solitary remnant of a Martian society which must have vanished before mankind, on Earth, had discovered fire.

For all practical purposes, Mars is a military frontier, patrolled by the U.N. to keep any one country from using it as a base for developing secret weapons. It's also a good place to test new atomic engines, since there isn't much of a fallout problem and no worry about a large population getting fallout jitters. John Reade, retired Major in the Space Service, had good military contacts, and had managed to get a clearance for the third—only the third—attempt to conquer Xanadu.

Private expeditions on Mars are simple to the point of being primitive. No private citizen or foundation could possibly pay freight charges for machinery to Mars. Private citizens travel on foot, taking with them only what they can carry on their backs. Besides, no one could take a car, a plane or a rocketship over the mountains and still find a safe place to land. Pack animals are out of the question; horses and burros cannot adapt to the thin air—thicker than pre-space theorists had dared to hope, but still pretty thin—and dogs and chimpanzees, which can, aren't much

good for pack-work. The Geographic Society is still debating about importing yaks and llamas from high-altitude Peru and Tibet; meanwhile, it's a good thing that gravity on Mars is low enough to permit tremendous packloads of necessities.

THE prime necessity is good lungs and a sackful of guts, while you scramble, scratch and curse your way over the mountains. Then a long, open valley, treacherously lined with needles of rock, and Xanadu lying—the bait in the mouth of the trap—at the top.

And then—what?

Kater and Hansen and the rest were grumbling over the cards again. "This place is jinxed," Mike complained, turning up a deuce. "We'll be lucky if we get a cent out of it. Now if we were working on Venus—but Mars, nyaah! Even if we find something, which I doubt, and live to tell about it—who cares?"

"Yeah," Spade muttered. "Reade, how much did you spend for dynamite to blast the walls?"

"You didn't pay for it," Reade said cheerfully.

Andrew stooped, shrugging on his leather jacket; thumbed the inside heating-units. "I'm going for a walk."

"Alone?" Reade asked sharply.

"Sure, unless someone wants to come along," Andrew said,

then suddenly understood. He pulled his pistol from his pocket, and handed it, butt-first, to Reade. "Sorry, I should have remembered. This is about where the shooting started, with the others."

Reade laughed, but he didn't return the gun.

"Don't go too far."

* * *

It was one of the rare, clear nights which sometimes did penance for the usual sandstorms. Andrew drew down the tent flap behind him, walked away into the darkness. At his foot he felt a little scurrying stooped, and caught up one of the blunt-nosed sand-mice. It squirmed on his palm, kicking hard with all six puny legs; then felt the comforting heat of his hand and yeepeeped with pleasure; he walked on, idly scratching the scaly little beast.

The two small moons were high overhead, and there was a purplish, shimmery light over the valley, with its grotesque floor of rock spires, fuzzed between with blackish patches of prickly-bushes—*spinosa martis*—matted in a close tangle between each little peak.

Downwind he heard the long screaming of a banshee; then he saw it, running blindly, a huge bird with its head down between trailing, functionless wings. Andrew held his breath and stood

still. The banshees had no intelligence to speak of, but by some peculiar tropism, they would rush toward anything that moved; the very heat of his body might attract them, and their huge clawed feet could disembowel a man at one stroke. And he had no pistol!

This one failed to sense him; it ran, trailing its wings and screaming eerily, like a cloaked girl, blindly into the dusk. Andrew let out his breath violently in relief. Suddenly he realized that he was not sure just which way the tent lay. He turned, crowding against one of the rock-spires. A little hollow gleamed pallidly in the moonlight. He remembered climbing a rise; he must have come this way—

He slid down roughly, a trailing pricker raking his hand. The sand-mouse leaped from his palm with a squeal and scuffled away. Andrew, sucking his bleeding palm, looked up and saw the walls of Xanadu lifting serried edges just over his head. How could he possibly have come so near in just a few minutes? Everything looked different—

He spun around, trying to scramble up the way he had come. He fell. His head struck rock, and the universe went dark.

TAKE it easy." John Reade's voice sounded disembodied over his head, "Just lie still.

You've got a bad bump, Andy."

He opened his eyes to the glare of stars and a bitter wind on his face. Reade caught at his hand as he moved it exploringly toward his face. "Let it alone, the bleeding's stopped. What happened? The banshee get you?"

"No, I fell. I lost my way, and I must have hit my head." Andrew let his eyes fall shut again. "I'm sorry, sir; I know you told us not to go near the city alone. But I didn't realize I'd come so close."

Reade frowned and leaned closer. "Lost your way? What are you talking about? I followed you—brought your pistol. I was afraid you'd meet a banshee. You hadn't gone two hundred yards from the tent, Andy. When I caught up with you, you were stumbling around, and then you rolled down on the ground into that little hollow. You kept muttering *No, no, no*—I thought the banshee had got you."

Andrew pushed himself upright. "I don't think so, sir. I looked up and saw the city right over my head. That's what made me fall. That's when it started."

"When *what* started?"

"I—don't know." Andrew put up his hand to rub his forehead, wincing as he touched the bruise. Suddenly he asked "John, did you ever wonder what the old Martians—the ones who built Xanadu—called the place?"

"Who hasn't?" The old man nodded, impatiently. "I guess we'll never know, though. That's a fool question to ask me right now!"

"It's something I felt," Andrew said, groping for words. "When I got up, after I stumbled, everything looked different. It was like seeing double; one part was just rocks, and bushes, and ruins, and the other part was—well, it wasn't like anything I'd ever seen before. I felt—" he hesitated, searching for words to define something strange, then said with an air of surprise, "*Homesick*. Yes, that's it. And the most awful—desolation. The way I'd feel, I guess, if I went back to Mount Denver and found it burned down flat. And then for just a second I knew what the city was called, and why it was dead, and why we couldn't get into it, and why the other men went crazy. And it scared me, and I started to run—and that's when I slipped, and hit my head."

READE'S worried face relaxed in a grin.

"Rubbish! The bump on your head mixed up your time-sense a little, that's all. Your hallucination, or whatever it was, came *after* the bump, not before."

"No," Andrew said quietly, but with absolute conviction. "I wasn't hurt that bad, John."

Reade's face changed; held

concern again. "All right," he said gently, "Tell me what you think you know."

Andrew dropped his face in his hands. "Whatever it was, it's gone! The bump knocked it right out of head. I remember that I knew—" he raised a drawn face, "but I can't remember what!"

Reade put his hand on the younger man's shoulder. "Let's get back to the tent, Andy, I'm freezing out here. Look, son, the whole thing is just your mind working overtime from that bump you got. Or—"

Andrew said bitterly "You think I'm going crazy."

"I didn't say that, son. Come on. We can talk it over in the morning." He hoisted Andrew to his feet. "I told Spade that if we weren't back in half an hour, he'd better come looking for us."

The men looked up from their cards, staring at the blood on Andrew's face, but the set of Reade's mouth silenced any comments. Andrew didn't want to talk. He quickly shucked jacket and trousers, crawled into his sleeping bag, thumbed the heat-unit and immediately fell asleep.

* * *

When he woke, the tent was empty. Wondering why he had been allowed to sleep—Spade usually meted out rough treatment to blanket-huggers—Andrew dressed quickly, gulped a

mug of the bitter coffee that stood on the hot-box, and went out to look for the others.

He had to walk some distance to find them. Armed with shovels, the four roughnecks were digging up the thorny pricklesh-bushes near the hollow where Andrew had fallen, while Reade, in the lee of a rock, was scowling over the fine print of an Army manual of Martio-biology.

"Sorry I overslept, John. Where do I go to work?"

"You don't. I've got another job for you." Reade turned to bark a command at Fairbanks. "Careful with the damned plant! I told you to wear gloves! Now get them on, and don't touch those things with your bare hands." He glanced back at Andrew. "I had an idea overnight," he said. "What do we really know about *spinosa martis*? And this doesn't quite look like the species that grows around Mount Denver. I think maybe this variety gives off some kind of gas—or poison." He pointed at the long scratch on Andrew's hand. "Your trouble started after you grabbed one of them. You know, there's locoweed on Earth that drives cattle crazy—mushrooms and other plants that secrete hallucinogens. If these things give off some sort of volatile mist, it could have dispersed in that little hollow down there—there wasn't much wind last night."

"What shall I do?" he asked.

"I'd rather not discuss that here. Come on, I'll walk back to the tent with you." He scrambled stiffly to his feet. "I want you to go back to Mount Denver, Andy."

Andrew stopped; turned to Reade accusingly.

"You *do* think I've gone crazy!"

Reade shook his head. "I just think you'll be better off in Mount Denver. I've got a job for you there—one man would have to go, anyhow, and you've had one—well, call it a hallucination—already. If it's a poison, the stuff might be cumulative. We may just wind up having to wear gas masks." He put a hand on the thick leather of Andrew's jacket sleeve. "I know how you feel about this place, Andy. But personal feelings aren't important in this kind of work."

"John—" half hesitant, Andrew looked back at him, "I had an idea overnight, too."

"Let's hear it."

"It sounds crazy, I guess," Andrew said diffidently, "but it just came to me. Suppose the old Martians were beings without bodies—discarnate intelligences? And they're trying to make contact with us? Men aren't used to that kind of contact, and it drives them insane."

Reade scowled. "Ingenious," he admitted, "as a theory, but

there's a hole in it. If they're dis-carnate, how did they build—" he jerked his thumb at the squat, fortress-like mass of Xanadu behind them.

"I don't know, sir. I don't know how the drive units of a spaceship work, either. But I'm here." He looked up. "I think one of them was trying to get in touch with me, last night. And maybe if I was trying, too—maybe if I understood, and tried to open my mind to it, too—"

READE looked disturbed. "Andy, do you realize what you're suggesting? Suppose this is all your imagination—"

"It isn't, John."

"Wait, now. Just suppose, for a minute; try to see it my way."

"Well?" Andrew was impatient.

"By trying to 'open your mind', as you put it, you'd just be surrendering your sane consciousness to a brooding insanity. The human mind is pretty complex, son. About nine-tenths of your brain is dark, shadowy, all animal instinct. Only the conscious fraction can evaluate—use logic. The balance between the two is pretty tricky at best. I wouldn't fool around with it, if I were you. Listen, Andy, I know you were born on Mars, I know how you feel. You feel at home here, don't you?"

"Yes, but that doesn't mean—"

"You resent men like Spade and Kater, coming here for the money that's in it, don't you?"

"Not really. Well, yes, but—"

"There was a Mars-born kid with Kingslander, Andy. Remember the log? He was the first to go. In a place like this, imagination is worse than smallpox. You're the focal point where trouble would start, if it started. That's why I picked men like Spade and Kater—insensitive, unimaginative—for the first groundwork here. I've had my eye on you from the beginning, Andy, and you reacted just about the way I expected. I'm sorry, but you'll have to go."

Andrew clenched his fists in his pocket, speaking dry-mouthed. "But if I was right—wouldn't it be easier for them to contact someone like me? Won't you try to see it *my* way?" He made a final, hopeless appeal. "Won't you let me stay? I *know* I'm safe here—I know they won't hurt me, whatever happens to the others. Take my gun if you want to—keep me in handcuffs, even—but don't send me back!"

Reade's voice was flat and final. "If I had any doubts, I wouldn't have them after that. Every word you say is just making it worse. Leave while you still can, Andy."

Andrew gave up. "All right. I'll start back now, if you insist."

"I do." Reade turned away and

hurried back toward the crew, and Andrew went into the tent and started packing rations in his blanket-roll for the march. The pack was clumsy, but not a tenth as heavy as the load he'd packed on the way up here. He jerked the straps angrily tight, hoisted the roll to his shoulder, and went out.

READE was waiting for him. He had Andrew's pistol.

"You'll need this." He gave it to him; hauled out his notebook and stabbed a finger at the sketchy map he had drawn on their way over the mountains. "You've got your compass? Okay, look; this is the place where our route crossed the mail-car track from Mount Denver to the South Encampment. If you camp there for a few hours, you can hitch a ride on the mail-car—there's one every other day—into Mount Denver. When you get there, look up Montray. He's getting the expedition together back there." Reade tore the leaf from his notebook, scribbling the address on the back. Andrew lifted an eyebrow; he knew Reade had planned the expedition in two sections, to prevent the possibility that they, too, would vanish without even a search-party sent after them.

"He won't have things ready, of course, but tell him to hurry it up, and give him all the help you

can. Tell him what we're up against."

"You mean what you're up against. Are you sure you can trust me to run your errands in Mount Denver?"

"Don't be so grim about it," Reade said gently. "I know you want to stay, but I'm only doing my duty the way I see it. I have to think of everybody, not just you—or myself." He gripped Andrew's shoulder. "If things turn out all right, you can come back when they're all under control. Good luck, Andy."

"And if they don't?" Andrew asked, but Reade had turned away.

* * *

It had been a rough day. Andrew sat with his back against a boulder, watching the sun drop swiftly toward the reddish range of rock he had climbed that afternoon. Around him the night wind was beginning to build up, but he had found a sheltered spot between two boulders; and in his heated sleeping-bag, could spend a comfortable night even at sixty-below temperatures.

He thought ahead while he chewed the tasteless Marbeef—Reade had outfitted the expedition with Space Service surplus—and swallowed hot coffee made from ice painstakingly scraped from the rocks. It had taken Reade, and five men, four days to cross the ridge. Travelling light,

Andrew hoped to do it in three. The distance was less than thirty miles by air, but the only practicable trail wound in and out over ninety miles, mostly perpendicular. If a bad sandstorm built up, he might not make it at all, but anyone who spent more than one season on Mars took that kind of risk for granted.

The sun dropped, and all at once the sky was ablaze with stars. Andrew swallowed the last of his coffee, looking up to pick out the Heavenly Twins on the horizon—the topaz glimmer of Venus, the blue star-sapphire that was Earth. Andrew had lived on Earth for a few years in his teens, and hated it; the thick moist air, the dragging feel of too much gravity. The close-packed cities nauseated him with their smell of smoke and grease and human sweat. Mars air was thin and cold and scentless. His parents had hated Mars the same way he had hated Earth—they were biologists in the Xenozoology division, long since transferred to Venus. He had never felt quite at home anywhere, except for the few days he had spent at Xanadu. Now he was being kicked out of that too.

SUDDENLY, he swore. The hell with it, sitting here, feeling sorry for himself! He'd have a long day tomorrow, and a rough climb. As he unrolled his sleep-

ing-bag, waiting for the blankets to warm, he wondered; how old was Xanadu?

Did it matter? Surely, if men could throw a bridge between the planets, they could build a bridge across the greater gap of time that separated them from these who had once lived on Mars. And if any man could do that, Andy admitted ungrudgingly, that man was John Reade. He pulled off his boots, anchored them carefully with his pack, weighted the whole thing down with rock, and crawled into the sack.

In the comforting warmth, relaxing, a new thought crossed his mind.

Whatever it was that had happened to him at Xanadu, he wasn't quite sure. The bump had confused him. But certainly *something* had happened. He did not seriously consider Reade's warning. He knew, as Reade could not be expected to know, that he had not suffered from a hallucination; had *not* been touched by the fringes of insanity. But he had certainly undergone a very strange experience. Whether it had been subjective or objective, he did not know; but he intended to find out.

How? He tried to remember a little desultory reading he had once done about telepathy. Although he had spoken glibly to Reade about 'opening his mind', he really had not the faintest

idea of what he had meant by the phrase. He grinned in the dark.

"Well, whoever and whatever you are," he said aloud, "I'm all ready and waiting. If you can figure out a way to communicate with me, come right ahead."

And the alien came.

"*I am Kamellin,*" it said.

* * *

I AM KAMELLIN.

That was all Andrew could think. It was all his tortured brain could encompass. His head hurt, and the dragging sense of some actual, tangible force seemed to pull and twist at him.

I AM KAMELLIN . . . KAMELLIN . . . KAMELLIN . . . it was like a tide that sucked at him, crowding out his own thoughts, dragging him under and drowning him. Andrew panicked; he fought it, thrashing in sudden frenzy, feeling arms and legs hit the sides of the sleeping-bag, the blankets twisted around him like an enemy's grappling hands.

Then the surge relaxed and he lay still, his breath loud in the darkness, and with fumbling fingers untangling the blankets. The sweat of fear was cold on his face, but the panic was gone.

For the force had not been hostile. It had only been—eager. Pathetically eager; eager as a friendly puppy is eager, as a friendly dog may jump up and knock a man down.

"Kamellin," Andrew said the

alien word aloud, thinking that the name was not particularly outlandish. He hoped the words would focus his thoughts sufficiently for the alien to understand.

"Kamellin, come ahead, okay, but this time take it easy, take it slow and easy. Understand?" Guardedly, he relaxed, hoping he would be able to take it if some unusual force were thrust at him. He could understand now why men had gone insane. If this—Kamellin—had hit him like that the *first* time—

Even now, when he understood and partly expected what was happening, it was an over whelming flood, flowing through his mind like water running into a bottle. He lay helpless, sweating. The stars were gone, blanked out, and the howling wind was quiet—or was it that he no longer saw or heard? He hung alone in a universe of emptiness, and then, to his disembodied consciousness, came the beginning of—what? Not speech. Not even a mental picture. It was simply contact, and quite indescribable. And it said, approximately;

GREETINGS. AT LAST. AT LAST IT HAS HAPPENED AND WE ARE BOTH SANE. I AM KAMELLIN.

THE wind was howling again, the stars a million flame-bright flares in the sky. Huddled in his blankets, Andrew felt the

dark intruder in his brain ebb and flow with faint pressure as their thoughts raced in swift question and answer. He whispered his own question aloud; otherwise Kamellin's thoughts flowed into his and intermingled with them until he found himself speaking Kamellin's thoughts.

"What are you? Was I right, then? Are you martians discarnate intelligences?

NOT DISCARNATE. WE HAVE ALWAYS HAD BODIES, OR RATHER—WE LIVED IN BODIES. BUT OUR MINDS AND BODIES WERE WHOLLY SEPARATE. NOTHING BUT OUR WILL TIED THEM TOGETHER. WHEN ONE BODY DIED, WE SIMPLY PASSED INTO ANOTHER NEWBORN BODY.

A spasm of claustrophobic terror grabbed at Andrew, and his flesh crawled. "You wanted—"

Kamellin's reassurance was immediate;

I DO NOT WANT YOUR BODY. YOU HAVE, Kamellin fumbled for a concept to express what he meant, YOU ARE A MATURE INDIVIDUAL WITH A PERSONALITY, A REASONING INTELLIGENCE OF YOUR OWN. I WOULD HAVE TO DESTROY THAT BEFORE YOUR BODY COULD JOIN WITH ME IN SYMBIOSIS. His thoughts flared indignation; THAT WOULD NOT BE HONORABLE!

"I hope all your people are as honorable as you are, then. What happened to the other expedition?"

He felt black anger, sorrow

and desolation, breaking like tidal waves in his brain. MY PEOPLE WERE MADDENED—I COULD NOT HOLD THEM BACK. THEY WERE NOT STABLE, WHAT YOU WOULD CALL, NOT SANE. THE TIME INTERVAL HAD BEEN TOO LONG. THERE WAS MUCH KILLING AND DEATH WHICH I COULD NOT PREVENT.

"If I could only find some way to tell Reade—"

IT WOULD BE OF NO USE. A TIME AGO, I TRIED THAT. I ATTEMPTED TO MAKE CONTACT, EASILY, WITH A YOUNG MIND THAT WAS PARTICULARLY RECEPTIVE TO MY THOUGHT. HE DID NOT GO INSANE, AND WE, TOGETHER, TRIED TO TELL CAPTAIN KINGSLANDER WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO THE OTHERS. BUT HE BELIEVED IT WAS MORE INSANITY, AND WHEN THE YOUNG MAN WAS KILLED BY ONE OF THE OTHERS, I HAD TO DISSIPATE AGAIN. I TRIED TO REACH CAPTAIN KINGSLANDER HIMSELF, BUT THE THOUGHT DROVE HIM INSANE—HE WAS ALREADY NEAR MADNESS WITH HIS OWN FEAR.

Andrew shuddered. "God!" he whispered. "What can we do?"

I DO NOT KNOW. I WILL LEAVE YOU, IF YOU WISH IT. OUR RACE IS FINALLY DYING, IN A FEW MORE YEARS WE WILL BE GONE, AND OUR PLANET WILL BE SAFE FOR YOU.

"Kamellin, no!" Andrew's protest was immediate and genuine. "Maybe, together, we can think of some way to convince them."

The alien seemed hesitant now;

WOULD YOU BE WILLING, THEN, TO—SHARE YOUR BODY FOR A TIME? IT WILL NOT BE EASY, IT IS NEVER EASY FOR TWO PERSONALITIES TO CO-INHABIT ONE BODY. I COULD NOT DO IT WITHOUT YOUR COMPLETE CONSENT. Kamellin seemed to be thinking thoughts which were so alien that Andrew could grasp them only vaguely; only the concept of a meticulous honor remained to color his belief in Kamellin.

"What happened to your original host-race?"

HE LAY shivering beneath his heated blankets as the story unfolded in his mind. Kamellin's race, he gathered, had been humanoid—as that concept expressed itself, he sensed Kamellin's amusement; RATHER, YOUR RACE IS MARTIANOID! Yes, they had built the city the Earthmen called Xanadu, it was their one technological accomplishment which had been built to withstand time. BUILT IN THE HOPE THAT ONE DAY WE MIGHT RETURN AND RECLAIM IT FROM THE SAND AGAIN, Kamellin's soundless voice whispered, THE LAST REFUGE OF OUR DYING RACE.

"What did you call the city?"

Kamellin tried to express the phonetic equivalent and a curious sound formed on Andrew's lips. He said it aloud, exploringly;

"Shein-la Mahari." His tongue lingered on the liquid syllables. "What does it mean?"

THE CITY OF MAHARI—MAHARI, THE LITTLE MOON. Andrew found his eyes resting on the satellite Earthmen called Deimos. "Shein-la Mahari," he repeated. He would never call it Xanadu again.

Kamellin continued his story.

The host-race, Andrew gathered, had been long-lived and hardy, though by no means immortal. The minds and bodies—"minds", he impressed on Andrew, was not exactly the right concept—were actually two separate, wholly individual components. When a body died, the "mind" simply transferred, without any appreciable interval, into a newborn host; memory, although slightly impaired and blurred by such a transition, was largely retained. So that the consciousness of any one individual might extend, though dimly, over an almost incredible period of time.

The dual civilization had been a simple, highly mentalized one, systems of ethics and philosophy superseding one another in place of the rise and fall of governments. The physical life of the hosts was not highly technological. Xanadu had been almost their only such accomplishment, last desperate expedient of a dying race against the growing inhospitality of a planet gripped in

recurrent, ever-worsening ice ages. They might have survived the ice alone, but a virus struck and decimated the hosts, eliminating most of the food animals as well. The birth-rate sank almost to nothing; many of the freed minds dissipated for lack of a host-body in which to incarnate.

Kamellin had a hard time explaining the next step. His kind could inhabit the body of anything which had life, animal or plant. But they were subject to the physical limitations of the hosts. The only animals which survived disease and ice were the sand-mice and the moronic banshees; both so poorly organized, with nervous systems so faulty, that even when vitalized by the intelligence of Kamellin's race, they were incapable of any development. It was similar, Kamellin explained, to a genius who is imprisoned in the body of a helpless paralytic; his mind undamaged, but his body wholly unable to respond.

A few of Kamellin's people tried it anyhow, in desperation. But after a few generations of the animal hosts, they had degenerated terribly, and were in a state of complete nonsanity, unable even to leave the life-form to which they had bound themselves. For all Kamellin knew, some of his people still inhabited the banshees, making transition

after transition by the faint, dim flicker of an instinct still alive, but hopelessly buried in generations of non-rational life.

THE few sane survivors had decided, in the end, to enter the prickly-bushes; *spinosa martis*. This was possible, although it, too, had drawbacks; the sacrifice of consciousness was the main factor in life as a plant. In the darkness of the Martian night, Andrew shuddered at Kamellin's whisper;

IMMORTALITY—WITHOUT HOPE. AN ENDLESS, DREAMLESS SLEEP. WE LIVE, SOMNOLENT, IN THE DARKNESS, AND THE WIND, AND WAIT—AND FORGET. WE HAD HOPED THAT SOME DAY A NEW RACE MIGHT EVOLVE ON THIS WORLD. BUT EVOLUTION HERE REACHED A DEAD END WITH THE BANSHEES AND SAND-MICE. THEY ARE PERFECTLY ADAPTED TO THEIR ENVIRONMENT AND THEY HAVE NO STRUGGLE TO SURVIVE: HENCE THEY NEED NOT EVOLVE AND CHANGE. WHEN THE EARTHMEN CAME, WE HAD HOPE. NOT THAT WE MIGHT TAKE THEIR BODIES. ONLY THAT WE MIGHT SEEK HELP FROM THEM. BUT WE WERE TOO EAGER, AND MY PEOPLE DROVE OUT—KILLED—

The flow of thoughts ebbed away into silence.

Andrew spoke at last, gently.

"Stay with me for a while, at least. Maybe we can find a way."

IT WON'T BE EASY, Kamellin warned.

"We'll try it, anyhow. How long ago—how long have you, well, been a plant?"

I DO NOT KNOW. MANY, MANY GENERATIONS—THERE IS NO CONSCIOUSNESS OF TIME. MANY SEASONS. THERE IS MUCH BLURRING. LET ME LOOK AT THE STARS WITH YOUR EYES.

"Sure," Andrew consented.

The sudden blackness took him by surprise, sent a spasm of shock and terror through his mind; then sight came back and he found himself sitting upright, staring wide-eyed at the stars, and heard Kamellin's agonized thoughts;

IT HAS BEEN LONG—again the desperate, disturbing fumbling for some concept, IT HAS BEEN NINE HUNDRED THOUSAND OF YOUR YEARS!

Then silence; such abysmal grieved silence that Andrew was almost shamed before the naked grief of this man—he could not think of Kamellin except as a man—mourning for a dead world. He lay down, quietly, not wanting to intrude on the sorrow of his curious companion.

Physical exhaustion suddenly overcame him, and he fell asleep.

* * *

"Was Mars like this in your day, Kamellin?"

Andrew tossed the question cynically into the silence in his

brain. Around him a freezing wind shifted and tossed at the crags, assailing the grip of his gauntleted hands on rock. He didn't expect any answer. The dark intruder had been dormant all day; Andrew, when he woke, had almost dismissed the whole thing as a bizarre fantasy, born of thin air and impending madness.

But now the strange presence, like a whisper in the dark, was with him again.

OUR PLANET WAS NEVER HOSPITABLE. BUT WHY HAVE YOU NEVER DISCOVERED THE ROADWAY THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS?

"Give us time," Andrew said cynically. "We've only been on Mars a minute or two by your standards. What roadway?"

"WE CUT A ROADWAY THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS WHEN WE BUILT SHEIN-LA MAHARI."

"What about erosion? Would it still be there?"

Kamellin had trouble grasping the concept of erosion. Rain and snow were foreign to his immediate experience. Unless the roadway had been blocked by a sandstorm, it should be there, as in Kamellin's day.

Andrew pulled himself to a ledge. He couldn't climb with Kamellin using part of his mind; the inner voice was distracting. He edged himself backward on a flat slab of rock, unstrapping his pack. The remnant of his morn-

ing coffee was hot in his canteen; he drank it while Kamellin's thoughts flowed through his. Finally he asked "Where's this roadway?"

Andrew's head reeled in vertigo. He lay flat on the ledge, dizzily grasping rock, while Kamellin tried to demonstrate his sense of direction. The whirl slowly quieted, but all he could get from the brain-shaking experience was that Kamellin's race had oriented themselves by at least eleven major compass points in what felt like four dimensions to Andrew's experience, oriented on fixed stars—his original host-race could see the stars even by daylight.

"But I can't, and anyway, the stars have moved."

I HAVE THOUGHT OF THAT Kamellin answered. BUT THIS PART OF THE MOUNTAINS IS FAMILIAR TO ME. WE ARE NOT FAR FROM THE PLACE. I WILL LEAD YOU THERE.

"Lead on, MacDuff."

THE CONCEPT IS UNFAMILIAR. ELUCIDATE.

Andrew chuckled. "I mean, which way do we go from here?"

The vertigo began to overcome him once more.

"No, no—not that again!"

THEN I WILL HAVE TO TAKE OVER ALL YOUR SENSES—

Andrew's mental recoil was as instinctive as survival. The terror of that moment last night, when Kamellin forced him into

nothingness, was still too vivid. "No! I suppose you could take over forcibly, you did once, but not without half killing me! Because this time I'd fight—I'd fight you like hell!"

Kamellin's rage was a palpable pain in his mind. HAVE YOU NO HONOR OF YOUR OWN, FOOL FROM A MAD WORLD? HOW COULD I LIE TO YOU WHEN MY MIND IS PART OF YOUR OWN? WANDER AS YOU PLEASE, I DO NOT SUFFER AND I AM NOT IMPATIENT. I THOUGHT THAT YOU WERE WEARY OF THESE ROCKY PATHS, NO MORE!

Andrew felt bitterly ashamed. "Kamellin—I'm sorry."

Silence, a trace of alien anger remaining.

Andrew suddenly laughed aloud. Alien or human, there were correspondences; Kamellin was sulking. "For goodness sake," he said aloud, "if we're going to share one body, let's not quarrel. I'm sorry if I hurt your feelings; this is all new to me. But you don't have to sit in the corner and turn up your nose, either!"

The situation suddenly struck him as too ridiculous to take seriously; he laughed aloud, and like a slow, pleasant ripple, he felt Kamellin's slow amusement strike through his own.

FORGIVE ME IF I OFFENDED. I AM ACCUSTOMED TO DOING AS I PLEASE IN A BODY I INHABIT. I AM

HERE AT YOUR SUFFERANCE, AND I OFFER APOLOGIES.

Andrew laughed again, in a curious doubled amusement, somehow eager to make amends. "Okay, Kamellin, take over. You know where I want to go—if you can get us there faster, hop to it."

BUT for the rest of his life he remembered the next hour with terror. His only memory was of swaying darkness and dizziness, feeling his legs take steps he had not ordered, feeling his hands slide on rock and being unable to clutch and save himself, walking blind and deaf and a prisoner in his own skull; and ready to go mad with the horror of it. Curiously enough, the saving thought had been; Kamellin's able to stand it. He isn't going to hurt us.

When sight and sense and hearing came back, and full orientation with it, he found himself at the mouth of a long, low canyon which stretched away for about twelve miles, perfectly straight. It was narrow, less than fifteen feet wide. On either side, high dizzy cliffs were cut sharply away; he marvelled at the technology that had built this turnpike road.

The entrances were narrow, concealed between rock, and deeply drifted with sand; the hardest part had been descend-

ing, and later ascending, the steep, worn-away steps that led down into the floor of the canyon. He had struggled and cursed his way down the two-foot steps, wishing that the old Martians had had shorter legs; but once down, he had walked the whole length in less than two hours—travelling a distance, which Reade had covered in three weary days of rock-climbing.

And beside the steps was a ramp down which vehicles could be driven; had it been less covered with sand, Andrew could have slid down!

When he finally came to the end of the canyon road, the nearly-impassible double ridge of mountains lay behind him. From there it was a simple matter to strike due west and intersect the road from Mount Denver to the spaceport. There he camped overnight, awaiting the mailcar. He was awake with the first faint light, and lost no time in gulping a quick breakfast and strapping on his pack; for the mail-cars were rocket-driven (in the thin air of Mars, this was practical) and travelled at terrific velocities along the sandy barren flats; he'd have to be alert to flag it down.

He saw it long before it reached him, a tiny cloud of dust; he hauled off his jacket and, shivering in the freezing air, flagged furiously. The speck

grew immensely, roared, braked to a stop; the driver thrust out a head that was only two goggled eyes over a heavy dustkerchief.

"Need a ride?"

Protocol on Mars demanded immediate identification.

"Andrew Slayton—I'm with the Geographic Society—Reade's outfit back in the mountains at Xanadu. Going back to Mount Denver for the rest of the expedition."

The driver gestured. "Climb on and hang on. I've heard about that gang. Reade's Folly, huh?"

"That's what they call it." He settled himself on the seatless floor—like all Martian vehicles, the rocket-car was a bare chassis without doors, seats or sidebars, stripped to lower freight costs—and gripped the rail. The driver looked down at him, curiously;

"I heard about that place Xanadu. Jinxed, they say. You must be the first man since old Torchevsky, to go there and get back safe. Reade's men all right?"

"They were fine when I left," Andrew said.

"Okay. Hang on," the driver warned, and at Andrew's nod, cut in the rockets and the sand-car leaped forward, eating up the desert.

MOUNT DENVER was dirty and smelly after the clean coldness of the mountains. An-

drew found his way through the maze of army barracks and waited in the officer's Rec quarters while a call-system located Colonel Reese Montray.

He hadn't been surprised to find out that the head of the other half of the expedition was a Colonel in active service; after all, within the limits imposed by regulations, the Army was genuinely anxious for Reade to find something at Xanadu. A genuine discovery might make some impression on the bureaucrats back on Earth; they might be able to revive public interest in Mars, get some more money and supplies instead of seeing everything diverted to Venus and Europa.

Montray was a tall thin man with a heavy Lunar Colony accent, the tiny stars of the Space Service glimmering above the Army chevrons on his sleeve. He gestured Andrew into a private office and listened, with a bored look, up to the point where he left Reade; then began to shoot questions at him.

"Has he proper chemical testing equipment for the business? Protection against gas—chemicals?"

"I don't think so," Andrew said. He'd half forgotten Reade's theory about hallucinogens in *spinosa martis*; so much had happened since that it didn't seem to make much difference.

"Maybe we'd better get it to him. I can wind things up here in an hour or so, if I have to, I've only got to tell the Commander what's going on. He'll put me on detached duty. You can attend to things here at the Geographic Society Headquarters, can't you, Slayton?"

Andrew said quietly "I'm going back with you, Captain Montray. And you won't need gas equipment. I did make contact with one of the old Martians."

Montray sighed and reached for the telephone. "You can tell Dr. Cranston all about it, over at the hospital."

"I knew you'd think I was crazy," Andrew said in resignation, "but I can show you a pass that will take you through the Double Ridge in three hours, not three days—less, if you have a sand-car."

THE Colonel's hand was actually on the telephone, but he didn't pick it up. He leaned back and looked at Andrew curiously. "You discovered this pass?"

"Well, yes and no, sir." He told his story quickly, skipping over the parts about Kamellin, concentrating on the fact of the roadway. Montray heard him out in silence, then picked up the telephone, but he didn't call the hospital. Instead he called an employment bureau in the poorer

part of Mount Denver. While he waited for the connection he looked uncertainly at Andrew and muttered "I'd have to go out there in a few weeks anyhow. They said, if Reade got well started, he could use Army equipment—" he broke off and spoke into the clicking phone.

"Montray here for the Geographic. I want twenty rough-necks for desert work. Have them here in two hours." He held down the contact button, dialled again, this time to call Dupont, Mars Limited, and requisition a first-class staff chemist, top priority. The third call, while Andrew waited—admiring, yet resenting the smoothness with which Montray could pull strings, was to the Martian Geographic Society headquarters; then he heaved himself up out of his chair and said "So that's that. I'll buy your story, Slayton. You go down—" he scrawled on a pink form, "and commandeered an Army sand-bus that will hold twenty roughnecks and equipment. If you've told the truth, the Reade expedition is already a success and the Army will take over. And if you haven't—" he made a curt gesture of dismissal, and Andrew knew that if anything went wrong, he'd be better off in the psycho ward than anywhere Montray could get at him.

* * *

When Army wheels started to



go round, they ran smoothly. Within five hours they were out of Mount Denver with an ease and speed which made Andrew—accustomed to the penny-pinching of Martian Geographic—gape in amazement. He wondered if this much string-pulling could have saved Kingslander. Crammed in the front seat of the sand-bus, between Montray and the DuPont chemist, Andrew reflected gloomily on the military mind and its effect on Reade. What would Reade say when he saw Andrew back again?

The wind was rising. A sand-storm on Mars makes the worst earthly wind look like a breeze to fly kites; the Army driver swore helplessly as he tried to see through the blinding sand, and the roughnecks huddled under a tarpaulin, coarse bandannas over their eyes, swearing in seven languages. The chemist

braced his kit on his knees—he'd refused to trust it to the baggage-bins slung under the chassis next to the turbines—and pulled his dustkerchief over his eyes as the hurricane wind buffeted the sand-bus. Montray shouted above the roar "Doesn't that road of yours come out somewhere along here?"

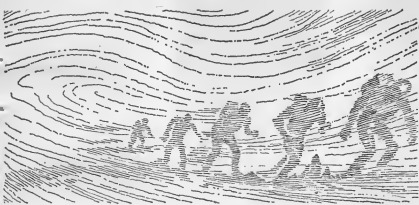
Shielding his eyes, Andrew peered over the low windbreak and crouched again, wiping sand from his face. "Half a mile more."

Montray tapped the driver on the shoulder. "Here."

The bus roared to a stop and the wind, unchallenged by the turbine noise, took over in their ears.

Montray gripped his wrist. "Crawl back under the canvas and we'll look at the map."

Heads low, they crawled in among the roughnecks; Montray



flashed a pocket light on the "map", which was no more than a rough aerial photo taken by a low flier over the ridge. At one edge were a group of black dots which might or might not have been Xanadu, and the ridge itself was a confusing series of blobs; Andrew rubbed a gritty finger over the photo.

"Look, this is the route we followed; Reade's Pass, we named it. Kingslander went this way; a thousand feet lower, but too much loose rock. The canyon is about here—that dark line could be it."

"Funny the flier who took the picture didn't see it." Montray raised his voice. "All out—let's march!"

"In'a dees' weather?" protested a gloomy voice, touching off a chorus of protest. Montray was inflexible. "Reade might be in bad trouble. Packs, everybody."

GRUMBLING, the roughnecks tumbled out and adjusted packs and dust-bandannas. Montray waved the map-photo at Andrew; "Want this?"

"I can find my way without it."

A straggling disorderly line, they began, Andrew leading. He felt strong and confident. In his mind Kamellin lay dormant and that pleased him too; he needed every scrap of his mind to fight the screaming torment of the wind. It sifted his way through his bandanna and ate into his skin, though he had greased his face heavily with lanolin before leaving the barracks. It worked, a gritty nuisance, through his jacket and his gloves. But it was his own kind of weather; Mars weather. It suited him, even though he swore as loud as anyone else.

Montray swore too, and spat grit from his throat.

"Where is this canyon of yours?"

A little break in the hilly terrain led northward, then the trail angled sharply, turned into the lee of a bleak canyon wall. "Around there." Andrew fell back, letting Montray lead, while he gave a hand to the old man from DuPont.

Montray's angry grip jerked at his elbow; Andrew's bandanna slid down and sailed away on the storm, and the chemist stumbled and fell to his knees. Andrew bent and helped the old fellow to his feet before he thrust his head around to Montray and demanded "What the hell is the big idea?"

"That's what I'm asking you!" Montray's furious voice shouted the storm down. Andrew half fell around the turn, hauled by Montray's grip; then gulped, swallowing sand, while the wind bit unheeded at his naked cheeks. For there was now no trail through the ridge. Only a steep slope of rock lay before them, blank and bare, every crevice filled to the brim with deep-drifted sand.

* * *

Andrew turned to Montray, his jaw dropping. "I don't understand this at all, sir," he gulped, and went toward the edge. There was no sign of ramp or steps.

"I do." Montray bit his words off and spat them at Andrew.

"You're coming back to Mount Denver—under arrest!"

"Sir, I came through here yesterday! There was a wide track, a ramp, about eleven feet wide, and at one side there were steps, deep steps—" he moved toward the edge, seeking signs of the vanished trailway. Montray's grip on his arm did not loosen. "Yeah, and a big lake full of pink lemonade down at the bottom. Okay, back to the bus."

The roughnecks crowded behind them, close to the deep-deep-drifted sand near the spires of rock Andrew had sighted as landmarks on either side of the canyon. One of them stepped past Montray, glaring at the mountain of sand.

"All the way out here for a looney!" he said in disgust.

He took another step—then suddenly started sinking—stumbled, flailed and went up to his waist in the loose-piled dust.

"Careful—get back—" Andrew yelled, "You'll go in over your heads!" The words came without volition.

The man in the sand stopped in mid-yell, and his kicking arms stopped throwing up dust. He looked thoughtfully up at the other roughnecks. "Colonel," he said slowly, "I don't think Slayton's so crazy. I'm standing on a step, and there's another one under my knee. Here, dig me out." He began to brush sand

away with his two hands. "Big steps—"

Andrew let out a yell of exultation, bending to haul the man free. "That's IT," he shouted. "The sandstorm last night just blew a big drift into the mouth of the canyon, that's all! If we could get through this drift, the rest lies between rock walls and around the next angle, the sand can't blow!"

MONTRAY pulled binoculars from his pocket and focused them carefully. "In farther, I do see a break in the slope that looks like a canyon," he said. "If you look at it quick, it seems to be just a flat patch, but with the glasses, you can see that it goes down between walls . . . but there's a hundred feet of sand, at least, drifted into the entrance, and it might as well be a hundred miles. We can't wade through that." He frowned, looking around at the sandbus. "How wide did you say this canyon was?"

"About fifteen feet. The ramp's about eleven feet wide."

Montray's brow ridged. "These busses are supposed to cross drifts up to eighty feet. We'll chance it. Though if I take an army sandbus in there, and get it stuck in a drift, we might as well pack for space."

Andrew felt grim as they piled back into the bus. Montray dis-

placed the driver and took the controls himself. He gave the main rocket high power; the bus shot forward, its quickly-extruded glider units sliding lightly, without traction, over the drifted sand. It skidded a little as Montray gunned it for the turn; the chassis hit the drift like a ton of lead. Swearing prayerfully, Montray slammed on the auxiliary rockets, and it roared—whined—sprayed up sand like a miniature sirocco, then, mercifully, the traction lessened, the gliders began to function, and the sandbus skied lightly across the drift and down the surface of the monster ramp, into the canyon.

It seemed hours, but actually it was less than four minutes before the glider units scraped rock and Montray shut off the power and called two men to help him wind up the retractors . . . the gliders could be shot out at a moment's notice, because on Mars when they were needed, they were needed *fast*, but retracting them again was a long, slow business. He craned his neck over the windbreak, looking up at the towering walls, leaning at a dizzy angle over them. He whistled sharply. "This is no natural formation!"

"I told you it wasn't," Andrew said.

The man from Dupont scowled. "Almost anything can

be a natural formation, in rock," he contradicted. "You say you discovered this pass, Slayton?"

Andrew caught Montray's eye and said meekly "Yes, sir."

The sandbus cruised easily along the canyon floor, and up the great ramp at the other end. Montray drove stubbornly, his chin thrust out. Once he said "Well, at least the Double Ridge isn't a barricade any more," and once he muttered "You could have discovered this by accident—delirious—and then rationalized it. . . ."

The Martian night was hanging, ready to fall, when the squat towers of the city reared up, fat and brown, against the horizon. From that distance they could see nothing of Reade's camp except a thin trail of smoke, clear against the purplish twilight. Vague unease stirred Andrew's mind and for the first time in hours, Kamellin's thoughts flickered dimly alive in the corridors of his brain.

"I AM FEARFUL. THERE IS TROUBLE."

Montray shouted, and Andrew jerked up his head in dismay, then leaped headlong from the still-moving sandbus. He ran across the sand. Reade's tent lay in a smoking ruin on the red sand. His throat tight with dread, Andrew knelt and gently turned up the heavy form that lay, unmoving, beside the charred ruin.

Fat Kater had lost more than his shirt.

MONTRAY finally stood up and beckoned three of the roughnecks. "Better bury him here," he said heavily, "and see if there's anything left unburned."

One of the men had turned aside and was noisily getting rid of everything he'd eaten for a week. Andrew felt like doing the same, but Montray's hand was heavy on his shoulder.

"Easy," he said. "No, I don't suspect you. He hasn't been dead more than an hour. Reade sent you away before it started, evidently." He gave commands; "No one else seems to have died in the fire. Spread out, two and two, and look for Reade's men." He glanced at the sun, hovering too close to the horizon; half an hour of sunlight, and Phobos would give light for another couple of hours—he said grimly "After that, we get back to the bus and get out of here, fast. We can come back tomorrow, but we're not going to wander around here by Deimos-light." He unholstered his pistol.

DON'T, said the eerie mentor in Andrew's brain, NO WEAPONS.

Andrew said urgently, "Colonel, have the roughnecks turn in their pistols! Kingslander's men killed each other pretty much like this!"

"And suppose someone meets a banshee? And Reade's men all have pistols, and if they're wandering around, raving mad—"

The next hour was nightmarish, dark phantoms moving shoulder to shoulder across the rock-needled ground; muttered words, far away the distant screams of a banshee somewhere. Once the crack of a pistol cut the night; it developed—after the roughnecks had all come running in, and half a dozen random shots had been fired, fortunately wounding no one—that one man had mistaken a rock-spire for a banshee. Montray cursed the man and sent him back to the sandbus with blistered ears. The sun dropped out of sight. Phobos, a vast purple balloon, sketched the towers of the city in faint shadows on the sand. The wind wailed and flung sand at the crags.

An abrupt shout of masculine hysteria cut the darkness; Montray jumped, stumbled and swore. "If this is another false alarm—"

It wasn't. Somebody flashed an electric torch on the sand; Mike Fairbanks, a bullet hole cleanly through his temple, lay on the sand that was only a little redder than his blood.

That left Hansen, Webber—and John Reade.

I CAN FIND THEM: LET ME FIND THEM! BEFORE SOMETHING WORSE HAPPENS—

MEASURELESS TO MAN

"Sir, I think I can find the others. I told you about Kamellin. This proves—"

"Proves nothing," grunted Montray. "But go ahead." Andrew felt coldly certain that inside the pocket of his leathers, Montray's finger was crooked around a trigger trained on his heart. Tense and terrified, Andrew let Kamellin lead him. How did he know that this was not an elaborate trap for the Earthmen? For Kamellin led them straight beneath the walls of the city and to an open door—an open door, and three expeditions had blasted without success!

ONE OF MY PEOPLE HAS TAKEN OVER ONE OF YOUR MEN. HE MUST HAVE FOUND THE HIDDEN DOOR. IF ONLY HE IS STILL SANE, WE HAVE A BARE CHANCE. . . .

"Stop there," Montray ordered curtly.

"Stop there," echoed a harsh wild voice, and the disheveled figure of John Reade, hatless, his jacket charred, appeared in the doorway. "Andrew!" His distorted shout broke into a sobbing gasp of relief, and he pitched headlong into Andrew's arms. "Andy, thank God you're here! They—shot me—"

ANDREW eased him gently to the ground. Montray bent over the old man, urging "Tell us what happened, John."

"Shot in the side—Andy

you were right—something got Spade first, then Kater fired the tent—Spade rushed him, shot Mike Fairbanks—then—then, Andy, it got me, it sneaked inside me, inside my head when I wasn't looking, inside my head—”

His head lolled on Andrew's shoulder.

Montray let go his wrist with a futile gesture. “He's hurt pretty bad. Delirious.”

“His head's as clear as mine. He's fainted, that's all,” Andrew protested. “If we bring him around, he can tell us—”

“He'll be in no shape to answer questions,” said the scientist from DuPont, very definitely, “not for a long time. Montray, round up the men; we've got to get out of here in a hurry—”

“Look out!” shouted somebody. A pistol shot crashed and the scream of an injured man raised wild echoes. Andrew felt his heart suck and turn over; then he suddenly sank into blindness and felt himself leap to his feet and run toward the voices. Kamellin had taken over!

Spade Hansen, tottering on his feet, stumbled toward them. His shirt hung raggedly in charred fragments. Through some alien set of senses, like seeing double, Andrew sensed the presence of another, one of Kamellin's kind.

IF I CAN GET THROUGH TO HIM—.....

Montray cocked, levelled his pistol.

“Hansen!” His voice cracked a whip, “stand where you are!”

Spade yelled something.

“*Po'ki hai marrai nic Mahari—*”

YOU FOOL! THEY ARE AFRAID OF US! STAND BACK!

Spade flung himself foreward and threw his pistol to the ground at Andrew's feet. “*Kamellin!*” he screamed, but the voice was not his own. Andrew's heart thudded. He stepped forward, letting the dark intruder in his mind take over all his senses again. A prisoner, he heard the alien voice shouting, felt his throat spewing forth alien syllables. There were shouts, a despairing howl, then somewhere two pistols cracked together and Andrew flickered back to full consciousness to see Hansen reel, stumble and fall inert. Andrew sagged, swayed; Montray held him upright, and Andrew whispered incredulously, “You shot him!”

“I didn't,” Montray insisted. “Rick Webber burst out of that doorway—fired into the crowd. Then—”

“Is Rick dead too?”

“As a doornail.” Montray gently lowered the younger man to the sand beside Reade. “You were raving yourself, for a minute, young Slayton.” He shouted angrily at the roughneck who

had shot, "You didn't have to kill Webber! A bullet in the leg would have stopped him!"

"He ran right on me with the gun—"

MONTRAY sighed and struck his forehead with his clenched hands. "Somebody make a stretcher for Reade and one for the kid here."

"I'm all right." Andrew shoved Montray's hand aside; bent to look at Reade.

"He's in a bad way," the man from DuPont said. "We'd better get them both back to Mount Denver while there's time." He looked sharply at Andrew. "You had better take it easy, too. You went shouting mad yourself, for a minute." He stood up, turning to Montray.

"I think my theory is correct. Virus strains can live almost indefinitely where the air is dry. If such a plague killed off the people who built the city, it would explain why everyone who's come up here has caught it—homicidal and suicidal."

"That isn't it—"

Montray checked him forcibly. "Slayton, you're a sick man too. You'll have to trust our judgment," he said. He tucked his own coat around Reade and stood up, his face grey in the fading moonlight. "I'm going to the governor," he said, "and have this place put off limits. Forty-

two men dead of an unknown Martian virus, that's too much. Until we get the money and the men to launch a full-scale medical project and knock it out, there won't be any more private expeditions—or public ones, either. The hell with Xanadu." He cocked his pistol and fired the four-shot signal to summon any stragglers.

Two of the men improvised a stretcher and began to carry Reade's inert body toward the sandbus. Andrew walked close, steadying the old man's limp form with his hands. He was beginning to doubt himself. Under the setting moon, the sand biting his face, he began to ask himself if Montray had been right. Had he dreamed, then rationalized? Had he dreamed Kamellin? KAMELLIN? he asked.

There was no answer from the darkness in his mind. Andrew smiled grimly, his arm easing Reade's head in the rude litter. If Kamellin had ever been there, he was gone, and there was no way to prove any of it—and it didn't matter any more.

* * *

"... therefore, with regret, I am forced to move that project Xanadu be shelved indefinitely," Reade concluded. His face was grim and resigned, still thin from his long illness. "The Army's attitude is inflexible, and lacking men, medics and money,

it seems that the only thing to do with Xanadu is to stay away from it."

"It goes without saying," said the man at the head of the table, "that we all appreciate what Major Reade and Mr. Slayton have been through. Gentlemen, no one likes to quit. But in face of this, I have no alternative but to second Major Reade's suggestion. Gentlemen, I move that the Martian chapter of the Geographic Society be closed out, and all equipment and personnel transferred to Aphrodite Base Twelve, South Venus."

The vote was carried without dissent, and Reade and Andrew, escaping the bombardment of questions, drifted into the cold sunlight of the streets. They walked for a long time without speaking. Reade said at last;

"Andy, we did everything we could. Montray put his own commission in jeopardy for us. But this project has cost millions already. We've just hit the bottom of the barrel, that's all."

Andrew hunched his shoulders. "I could be there in three days."

"I'd like to try it, too." Reade sounded grim. "But forget it, Andy. Shein-la Mahara is madness and death. Forget it. Go home—"

"Home? Home where? To Earth?" Andrew broke off, staring. *What* had Reade said?

"Say that again. The name of the city."

"Shein-la Mahari, the city of —" Reade gulped. "What in the hell—" he looked at Andy in despair. "I thought I could forget, convince myself it never happened. It left me when Hansen shot me. We've *got* to forget it, Andy—at least until we're on the ship going home."

"Ship, hell! We're not going back to Earth, Reade!"

"Here, here," said Reade, irritably, "*Who's* not going?"

Andrew subsided, thinking deeply. Then, with a flash of inspiration, he turned to Reade. "John, who owns the Society's test animals?"

Reade rubbed his forehead. "Nobody, I guess. They sure won't bother shipping a few dogs and chimps out to Venus! I've got authority to release them—I guess I'll turn them over to Medic. Why? You want a dog? A monkey? What for?" He stopped in his tracks, glaring. "What bug have you got in your brain now?"

"Never mind. You're going back to Earth by the next ship."

"Don't be in such a rush," Reade grumbled, "The *Erdenluft* won't blast for a week."

Andrew grinned. "John, those animals are pretty highly organized. I wonder—"

Reade's eyes met his in sudden comprehension. "Good lord, I

never thought of that! Come on, let's hurry!"

AT THE deserted shack where the Society's animals were kept, a solitary keeper glanced indifferently at Reade's credentials and let them in. Reade and Andrew passed the dogs without comment, glanced at and rejected the one surviving goat, and passed on to the caged chimpanzees.

"Well, either I'm crazy or this is it," he said, and listened for that inner answer, the secret intruder in his brain. And after a long time, dimly, it came as if Kamellin could not at once re-establish lapsed contact.

I SHOULD HAVE LEFT YOU. THERE IS NO HOPE NOW, AND I WOULD RATHER DIE WITH MY PEOPLE THAN SURVIVE AS A PRISONER IN YOUR MIND.

"No!" Andrew swung to face the chimpanzee. "Could you enter that living creature without his consent?"

There was a tightness across his diaphragm, as if it were his own fate, not Kamellin's, that was being decided.

THAT CREATURE COULD NOT GIVE CONSENT.

"I'm sorry, I tried—"

Kamellin's excitement almost burst into speech. NO, NO, HE IS PERFECTLY SUITED, FOR HE IS HIGHLY ORGANIZED, BUT LACKING INTELLIGENCE—

"A chimp's intelligent—"

A shade of impatience, as if Kamellin were explaining to a dull child; A BRAIN, YES, BUT HE LACKS SOMETHING—WILL, SPIRIT, SOUL, VOLITION—

"A chimp can be taught to do almost anything a man can—

EXCEPT TALK, COMMUNICATE, USE REAL REASON. YOU CANNOT ENTIRELY GRASP THIS EITHER, I KNOW. It was the first time Andrew had been allowed to glimpse the notion that Kamellin did not consider Andrew his complete equal. THE BANSHEES ARE THE FIRST STAGE: A PHYSICAL BRAIN, CONSCIOUSNESS, BUT NO INTELLIGENCE. THEY CANNOT BE ORGANIZED. THEN YOUR CREATURE, YOUR PRIMATE MAMMAL, INTELLIGENCE BUT NO SOUL. HOWEVER, WHEN VITALIZED BY TRUE REASON . . . Kamellin's thought-stream cut off abruptly, but not before Andrew had caught the concept, WHAT DOES THE EARTHMAN THINK HE IS, ANYHOW?

Kamellin's thoughts were troubled; FORGIVE ME, I HAD NO RIGHT TO GIVE YOU THAT . . .

"Inferiority complex?" Andrew laughed.

YOU DO NOT FUNCTION ON THE LEVEL OF YOUR SOUL. YOU'RE AWARE ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY IN YOUR FIVE SENSES AND YOUR REASONING INTELLIGENCE. BUT YOUR IMMORTAL MIND IS SOMEHOW STUNTED: YOU HUMANS HAVE SLID INTO A DIFFERENT TIME-

TRACK SOMEHOW, AND YOU LIVE ONLY IN THREE DIMENSIONS, LOSING MEMORY—

"I don't believe in the soul, Kamelin."

THAT IS THE POINT I AM TRYING TO MAKE, ANDREW.

READE touched his shoulder. "You give me the creeps, talking to yourself. What now?"

They picked out a large male chimp and sat looking at it while it grimaced at them with idiotic mildness. Andrew felt faint distaste. "Kamellin in that thing?"

Reade chuckled. "Quit being anthropomorphic. *That thing* is a heck of a lot better adapted to life on Mars than you are—look at the size of the chest—and Kamellin will know it, if you don't!" He paused. "After the switch, how can we communicate with Kamellin?"

Andrew relayed the question, puzzled. Finally he said "I'm not sure. We're using straight thoughts and he can't get any notion of the *form* of our language, any more than I can of his. Reade, can a chimp learn to talk?"

"No chimp ever has."

"I mean, if a chimp *did* have the intelligence, the reasoning power, the drive to communicate in symbols or language, would its vocal cords and the shape of his mouth permit it?"

"I wouldn't bet on it," Reade

said, "I'm no expert on monkey anatomy, though. I wouldn't bet against it either. Why? Going to teach Kamellin English?"

"Once he leaves me, there won't be any way to communicate except the roughest sort of sign language!"

"Andy, we've got to figure out some way! We can't let that knowledge be lost to us! Here we have a chance at direct contact with a mind that was alive when the city was built—"

"That's not the important part," Andrew said. "Ready, Kamellin?"

YES. AND I THANK YOU ETERNALLY. YOUR WORLD AND MINE LIE APART, BUT WE HAVE BEEN BROTHERS. I SALUTE YOU, MY FRIEND. The voice went still. The room reeled, went into a sick bluer—

"Are you all right?" Reade peered anxiously down at Andrew. Past him, they both realized that the big chimpanzee—no, Kamellin!—was looking over Reade's shoulder. Not the idiot stare of the monkey. Not human, either. Even the posture of the animal was different.

Andrew—recognized—Kamellin.

And the—difference—in his mind, was gone.

Reade was staring; "Andy, when you fell, he jumped forward and *caught* you! No monkey would do that!"

Kamellin made an expressive movement of his hands.

Andrew said "A chimp's motor reflexes are marvelous, with a human—no, a *better* than human intelligence, there's practically no limit to what he can do." He said, tentatively, "Kamellin?"

"Will the chimp recognize that?"

"Look, Reade—will you remember something, as a favor to me? He—the chimp—is *not* a freak monkey! He is Kamallin—my close personal friend—and a damned sight more intelligent than either of us!"

Reade dropped his eyes. "I'll try."

"Kamellin?"

AND Kamellin spoke. Tentatively, hoarsely, mouthily, as if with unfamiliar vocal equipment, he spoke. "An—drew," he said slowly. "Shein. La. Mahari." They had each reached the extent of their vocabulary in the other's language. Kamellin walked to the other cages, with the chimpanzee's rolling scamper which somehow had, at the same time, a controlled and fluid dignity that was absolutely new. Reade dropped on a bench. "I'll be damned," he said. "But do you realize what you've done, Andrew? A talking monkey. At best, they'd call us a fraud. At worst the scientists would end

up dissecting him. We'll never be able to prove anything or tell anyone!"

"I saw that all along," Andrew said bitterly, and dropped to the bench. Kamellin came and squatted beside them, alert, with an easy stillness.

Suddenly Andrew looked up. "There are about twenty chimps. Not enough. But there's a good balance, male to female, and they can keep up a good birth rate—"

"What in the—"

"Look," Andrew said excitedly, "it's more important to preserve the Martian race—the last few sane ones—than to try convincing the Society—; we probably couldn't, anyhow. We'll take the chimps to Shein-la Mahari. Earthmen never go there, so they won't be molested for a while, anyhow—probably not for a hundred years or so! By that time, they'll have been able to—to reclaim their race a little, gain back their culture, and there'll be a colony of intelligent beings, monkeylike in form but not monkeyish. We can leave records of this. In a hundred years or so—"

Reade looked at him hesitantly, his imagination gripped, against his will, by Andrew's vision. "Could they survive?"

"Kamellin told me that the city was—time-sealed, he called it, and in perfect order." He looked down at the listening stillness of Kamellin and was con-

vinced that the Martian understood; certainly Kamellin's reception of telepathy must be excellent, even if Andrew's was not.

"It was left that way—waiting for a race they could use, if one evolved. Chimps have terrific dexterity, once they're guided by intelligence. They made their food chemically, by solar power, and there are heat units, records—just waiting."

Reade stood up and started counting the chimpanzees. "We'll probably lose our jobs and our shirts—but we'll try it, Andy. Go borrow a sandbus—I've still got good contacts." He scribbled a note on a scrap of paper he found in his pocket, then added grimly "But don't forget; we've still got to be on the *Erdenluft* when it lifts off."

"We'll be on it."

ONCE again Andrew Slayton stood on the needled desert for a last look at the squat towers of Shein-la Mahari. He knew he would never come back.

Reade, his white shock of hair bent, stood beside him. Around them the crowd of Martians stood motionless, with a staid dignity greater than human, quietly waiting.

"No," Reade said half to himself, "it wouldn't work, Andy. Kamellin might take a chance on you, but you'd both regret it."

Andrew did not move or an-

swer, still looking hungrily up at the glareless ramparts. If I could only write a book about it, he was thinking. The day they had spent had been what every interplanetary archaeologist dreams about in his most fantastic conjectures. The newly-incarnate Martians had been gratefully receptive to Reade's expressive sign-language and the tour of the city was a thing past all their wildest imagination.

Beneath the sand of centuries Shein-la Mahari was more than a city; it was a world. Never would they forget the heart-stopping thrill when a re-inhabited Martian, working with skill and inhuman awareness, had uncovered the ancient machinery of the water supply, connected to the miles-deep underground lakes, and turned great jets of water into hydroponic gardens; seeds long in storage had instantly bubbled into sprouting life. A careful engineer, her monkeylike paws working with incredible skill, had set sealed power units to humming. Rations, carefully time-sealed against emergency, were still edible. Reade and Andrew had shared the strangest meal of their lives with twenty-odd Martians—and it was not the suddenly-controlled chimpanzees whose table manners had seemed odd. Martian conventions were a cultural pattern of unbelievable stability.

Nor would he ever forget the great library of glyphs inscribed on flexible sheets of Vanadium, the power-room of throbbing machinery—

"Forget it," Reade said roughly, "they'll probably send us to Titan—and who knows what we'll find there?"

"Yeah. We've got a spaceship to catch." Andrew climbed into the sandcar, leaning out to grasp Kamellin's paw—sensing that the Martian would understand the gesture, if not the words. "Goodbye, Kamellin. Good luck to all of you." He cut the rockets in and shot away in a thunderstorm of sand. He drove fast and dangerously. He would never see Shein-la Mahari again. He would leave Mars, probably forever. And forever he would be alone. . . .

"They'll make out," said Reade gruffly, and put an arm around his shoulders. To his intense hor-

ror, Andrew discovered that he was blinking back scalding tears.

"Sure," he made himself say. "In a few hundred years they'll be way ahead of Earth. Look what seventy-odd pilgrims did in North America, on our own planet! Synthetics—power—maybe even interstellar travel. They'd visited Earth once, before the plagues that killed them, Kamellin told me."

The sandcar roared around the rock-wall and Shein-la Mahari was gone. Behind them Andrew heard a rumble and a dull, groundshaking thunder. The pass behind them crashed in ruin; the Ridge was impassable again. Kamellin and his Martians would have their chance, unmolested by Earthmen, for at least a few years—

"I wonder," Reade mused, "which race will discover the other first. . . .?"

THE END

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"PSYCHO"- logical BLOCH

By SAM MOSKOWITZ

Sketch by SUMMERS



ROBERT BLOCH catapulted to public attention and accelerated success when Alfred Hitchcock's production of his novel, *Psycho*, not only shocked the nation and the critics but also boasted the second largest gross in the history of black-and-white motion pictures. This tale of the murder of a young girl in the shower of her motel room and the suspicion that focuses on a querulous old woman (who is heard but never seen) and her son, ends with an explosive im-

pact that Hitchcock regarded as "technically the most satisfying" of any of his productions.

It might be asked what has all this to do with science fiction. The answer is: very little, except that Bloch has spent a good part of his lifetime as a fan and writer building a public image as a promoter of science fiction while scoring most of his successes outside of the field. He was guest of honor of the Sixth Annual World Science Fiction Convention, held in Toronto, Canada,

July 3-5, 1948; yet, for five years preceding the honor, science fiction writing had made up a relatively minor portion of his work.

He received the "Hugo" Award for the best science fiction short story of the year, *The Hell-Bound Train* (THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION, Sept., 1958), which was fine—except that the story in question centered around a pact with the devil, a theme which does not belong in the science fiction canon.

It is obvious that Robert Bloch is a paradox, a special case and a privileged character. How did he get that way?

HE WAS born April 5, 1917, in Chicago, the first child of a middle-class urban family. His parents were Raphael A. Bloch, a bank cashier, and Stella Loeb Bloch, a school teacher and social worker. Though his parents were of German-Jewish extraction, most of the religious instruction Bloch received was at the Methodist Church in Maywood, a suburb of Chicago. This was not due to any change in religious persuasion, but to the closeness with which his family's social activities were interwoven with that of the community.

Both his parents had an abiding interest in the performing arts. His mother once turned down an offer to go into light

opera where she might have capitalized on an excellent singing voice. She was also a fine pianist and accompanist. The theatre and vaudeville was his father's notion of grand entertainment. As a result, young Robert was introduced to the fabulous world of living players when it was still at its peak. He also watched the parade of stars of the silent screen: Lon Chaney, Douglas Fairbanks, Charlie Chaplin, Harold Lloyd, Buster Keaton, Rudolph Valentino.

Lon Chaney's movie, *The Phantom of the Opera*, scared Bloch. But it also converted him to the world of psychiatric terror and supernatural. His introduction to the fantasy magazines came in August, 1927, when his aunt offered to buy him any magazine on the newsstand. To her consternation he gleefully selected the issue of WEIRD TALES for that month, featuring Otis Adelbert Kline's *The Bride of Osiris*, with a relatively sexy girl on the cover. Two issues later he really "flipped" when he read Lovecraft's *Pickman's Model*, a frightening tale of a painter who drew monsters from "real life".

Bloch's conversion to science fiction magazines came with the Feb., 1928 AMAZING STORIES featuring *The Revolt of the Pedestrians* by David H. Keller, M.D., a tale of city folk who gradually

lose their ability to walk due to over-mechanization.

The effects of the Depression of the '30's on his family's finances caused a cessation of Bloch's fantasy magazine purchases. His father became afflicted with gradual paralysis of his legs. The family moved from place to place as the whims of economics dictated. At Milwaukee's Lincoln High School, Bloch coasted in his studies but went full tilt into "dramatics." The stage appealed strongly to him, particularly comedy, and he not only acted but wrote skits as well. Bloch's scintillating wit and superb sense of pace, subsequently demonstrated in his numerous stints as master of ceremonies at science fiction affairs, had their origin here. He wanted to be a comic but vaudeville was disappearing and, with it, burlesque. The Depression was scarcely the time for a nightclub career.

IN 1932 Bloch resumed buying WEIRD TALES, encountering Lovecraft's stories again. Strongly impressed, he wrote the author a fan letter. He was amazed to receive a friendly response and a correspondence followed. He sent Lovecraft trial literary efforts for criticism, some of which had been rejected by WEIRD TALES' editor Farnsworth Wright. Lovecraft suggested the science fic-

tion fan magazines and sent him copies of THE FANTASY FAN, containing his series of poems *Fungii From Yuggoth*, a well as recommending William Crawford's semi-professional fantasy magazine MARVEL TALES. It was there that Bloch first saw print with *Lilies*, a moving short-short of an old lady who every Saturday night brought flowers from the country to her upstairs neighbors, climaxed when she brings the funeral lilies her son has left after her death.

A second story accepted by Crawford appeared in UNUSUAL STORIES, a companion magazine, after Bloch had already achieved professional sales nearly a year later. Titled *Black Lotus*, it dealt with a man who cut his own throat in a dream. The story was a minute stylistic recreation of a certain period in Lovecraft's writing when he was heavily influenced by the technique of Lord Dunsany. Readers found themselves confronted in the case of Robert Bloch's *Black Lotus* as they would be again when Henry Kuttner began to sell, with the ludicrous spectacle of a Lovecraft-struck acolyte imitating Lovecraft's imitation of Dunsany.

Another very early Bloch, *The Laughter of a Ghou*l, was a vignette concerning a man waiting for his wife to give birth to a child, only to find the mother

dead and the new-born infant a chortling ghoul. This tale, which appeared in the Dec., 1934 FANTASY FAN, was a literary failure, but nevertheless these test efforts of Robert Bloch's showed such definite ability that it was small surprise when in July, 1934, a month after his graduation from high school and two months after turning 17, he cracked WEIRD TALES, with a short titled *The Secret of the Tomb*. A second sale, a real shocker labeled *The Feast in the Abbey*, was published first. The story appeared in WEIRD TALES for Jan., 1935 and concerned a man who sits down to a feast with some "monks" in an old abbey, eventually to discover the main meat course was his brother!

Despite the overpowering influence of Lovecraft, *The Feast in the Abbey* was a remarkably effective effort and tied for first place with three other stories in the same issue by Seabury Quinn, Clark Ashton Smith and Laurence J. Cahill. The reader's department, "The Eyrie" was begrudgingly filled with favorable comment on Bloch's story, a surprising event since he had made the political error of venting his spleen on Robert E. Howard's Conan in a letter in the Nov., 1934 WEIRD TALES, and the readers were openly out to "get" him. The controversial letter had read: "I am awfully

tired of poor old Conan the Cluck, who for the past 15 issues has every month slain a new wizard, tackled a new monster, come to a violent and sudden end that was averted (incredibly enough!) in just the nick of time and won a new girl friend, each of whose penchant for nudism won for her a place of honor, either on the cover or on the inner illustration. Such has been Conan's history, and from the realms of the Kushites to the lands of Quilenia, from the shores of the Shemites to the palaces of Dyme-Novell-Bolonia, I cry: 'Enough of this brute and his iron-thewed sword-thrusts—may he be sent to Valhalla to cut out paper dolls.' "

It was a close shave, for Howard was writing at his bloody best and his fans were legion, including even Bloch's newly acquired mentor H. P. Lovecraft, who must have taken small pleasure in the incident. Had Farnsworth Wright, editor of WEIRD TALES, printed first the story Bloch had sold him first, *The Secret in the Tomb* (which eventually appeared in the May, 1935 issue), there would have been a literary massacre. *The Secret in the Tomb* was a weak mood piece of a man who discovers his ancestor is a ghoul.

It was an important lesson learned early. Rarely again, did Bloch ever pervert his brilliant

wit to vitriolic ends. To the contrary he became a master of the art of making people feel important as he ribbed them, of investing his literary or verbal lampoon with an implied compliment. As a result, his friends were to become many and his detractors negligible.

DURING this early period of his writing Bloch was held completely in thrall by Lovecraft. Virtually nothing of his own personality showed through. Such popularity as he enjoyed was obtained by basking in the reflection of the master. *The Shambler from the Stars* (WEIRD TALES, Sept., 1935) was dedicated to H. P. Lovecraft and Bloch even got his permission to use him as the central character, who utters an incantation which draws a monster from the unknown to break him up like kindling wood and suck the blood from his body.

Lovecraft employed a "famous" book as a literary device in his stories, *The Necronomicon*; Clark Ashton Smith was fond of *The Book of Eibon*; and August Derleth coveted the *Cultes des Goules*, so why couldn't Bloch invent his own book? He did just that in *Shambler From the Stars* "christening" it *De Vermis mysteriis* ("Mysteries of the Worm") by Ludvig Prinn, a man allegedly burned at

the stake in Brussels as an alchemist and necromancer.

"Robert Bloch deserves plenty of praise for *Shambler of the Stars*. Now why doesn't Mr. Lovecraft return the compliment and dedicate a story to the author?" suggested reader B. M. Reynolds of North Adams, Mass. in WEIRD TALES' *Eyrie* for Nov., 1935. His suggestion eventually became reality when H. P. Lovecraft wrote *The Haunter of the Dark* (WEIRD TALES, Dec., 1936) as a sequel to *Shambler of the Stars* and dedicated it to Robert Bloch. In this story he returns the compliment and Robert "Blake" is killed by a loathsome monstrosity which breaks out of an abandoned church tower in Providence, Rhode Island, under the cover of darkness caused by an electrical breakdown.

Bloch received a write up in the Milwaukee papers in 1935, underscoring his success as a weird-fiction writer. This resulted in an invitation to join a unique literary group called The Milwaukee Fictioneers. Many members were writers working in the fantasy field. The group met once every two weeks, barred all women and confined its membership to selling professionals only. It had a rule against reading manuscripts at meetings but members worked extremely hard, in unity, on story plotting. Meetings were

held at alternate members' homes and the size of the group rarely exceeded 12 people. The result was writing discipline that paid off for all and gave Bloch a feeling of professional acceptance.

Among its members was Stanley G. Weinbaum, whose influence on writers who followed him was more far-reaching than even that of Lovecraft. Bloch became a frequent visitor to the home of Weinbaum. Among the "secrets" that Bloch confessed to him and other Milwaukee Fictioneers was the fact that he still yearned to be a comic. His adulation of Lovecraft was light-years removed from his ambition, but he recalls, "I did submit gags to F. Chase Taylor, of the then-popular comedy team, Stoopnagle and Budd, whom I admired, and got a couple of small checks. When Roy Atwell, then appearing with Fred Allen, came to town in vaudeville, I appeared on an amateur show at the theatre: Atwell was not only interested in my impersonation, he also bought the monologue material I used for myself. For a short time I did nitery stints as M. C. or monologist, but the money was poor even by Depression standards, the hours were terrible, and the whole milieu seemed seedy and seamy. I wasn't hip enough to thrive at the trade."

The death of Lovecraft on March 15, 1937, affected Robert Bloch much more deeply than he revealed in his eulogy which appeared in the June, 1937, *WEIRD TALES*. "Of course there ought to be a memorial volume, with stories chosen by the readers," he wrote. "That's the smallest tribute we can pay." (A few years later August W. Derleth and Donald Wandrei accomplished that objective and the beginning of a wider fame for Lovecraft.) "But there's an end of the world," Bloch continued, "the world of Cthulhu, Yog-Sothoth, Nyarlathotep, and Abdul Alhazred; the finest world of fantasy I know."

DURING the past year Bloch's stories in the Lovecraft vein had been growing in effectiveness, predominantly due to greater care in building the backgrounds of his stories. Their popularity became an undeniable fact, but equally undeniable was the fact that the endings were forced and unbelievable. Stories like *The Druidic Doom*, *The Faceless God*, *The Grinning Ghoul*, *The Opener of the Way*, *The Dark Demon* and *Brood of Bubastis* were cast of the same mold. The author seemed unaware that in the majority of his later writings Lovecraft had abandoned the supernatural in explaining his horrors and had

leaned with increasing weight on science. Bloch was actually writing pastiches of early Lovecraft.

In this respect he had company. Henry Kuttner, as fervid a Lovecraft enthusiast and imitator as Bloch, had broken into the professional ranks by the same road. They had been correspondents for years, and upon Lovecraft's death, sensing Bloch's bereavement, Kuttner's mother suggested to Henry that Bloch be invited as a guest at their Beverly Hills home. C. L. Moore was in town at the time, and Bloch was also introduced to an aspiring author named Fritz Leiber, Jr. They all were as curious about Bloch as he was about them, and what they saw was a tall, angular young man, not yet turned 21, with features as sharp as his wit, and rimless glasses that imparted an intellectual appearance. Bloch was soft spoken, quiet, almost gentle.

When Ray Palmer became editor of AMAZING STORIES in 1938, he was desperately casting about for Chicago area writers he could shape into a dependable team; he urged Bloch to try his hand at writing science fiction. Bloch's first attempt, *The Secret of the Observatory* in the Aug., 1938 AMAZING STORIES was a pot-boiler about a camera that could photograph through walls. But it did force Bloch to write dia-

logue. Lovecraft couldn't write dialogue, so precious little of it had appeared in any story by writers influenced by him. In his nearly four years of fantasy writing, Bloch probably hadn't written 1,000 words of dialogue.

IN HIS second attempt at science fiction, Bloch hit the bulls-eye. No one knew it at the time but Bloch had found the thing he was best at, and that would eventually lead to the writing of *Psycho*. Authors had detailed every conceivable aspect of the *physical* side of space flight, but in *The Strange Flight of Richard Clayton* in AMAZING STORIES for March, 1939, Bloch explored its *psychological* aspects. A man is sent in a windowless space ship to Mars on a journey that will take 10 years. His instrument board is smashed on take-off so he has no way of estimating distance or duration. Time passes and his hair whitens, his skin shrivels and he begins to grow old. Finally the ship stops vibrating and he emerges—to learn that the ship never left Earth, that he was sealed inside for only one week.

It was in the same magazine that Bloch was first able to express a broad note of humor, accomplishing this in *The Man Who Walked Through Mirrors*, a tale that was a spoof on AMAZING STORIES' cover slogan of that pe-

riod: "Every Story Scientifically Accurate."

In science fiction Bloch felt uninhibited, under no obligation to be anything but himself. In weird fiction, the ghost of H. P. Lovecraft would bind him for years in a literary strait jacket.

Branching out into AMAZING STORIES, STRANGE STORIES, and UNKNOWN, as well as into the mystery-horror magazines, Bloch earned enough money in 1939 to consider marriage. Additionally, he was doing political ghost writing, something he would continue with through 1941. He met Marion Ruth Holcombe in 1939 and they were married in October, 1940. As a child she had suffered from tuberculosis of the hip. Symptoms began to recur in 1941, forcing Bloch to find a steady job and temporarily, at least, give up the thought of making writing his main source of income.

He went to work for the Gustav Marx Advertising Agency as a copywriter in 1942, feeling it was just a temporary expedient. But in 1943 a daughter, Sally Ann, was born and his wife's illness required lengthy treatment. The result was that Bloch stayed with the Gustav Marx Agency for the next 10 years, writing only in his spare time.

Despite his problems, he began a series of humorous stories in the Damon Runyon manner

for FANTASTIC ADVENTURES, built around the character of Lefty Feep. Some were science fiction, others fantasy and still others straight weirds, but one and all they were the most insane mélange of cockeyed humor the fantasy magazines had ever seen. From the first, whose title has since become an American axiom, *Time Wounds All Heels* (FANTASTIC ADVENTURES, April, 1942), through the last, appropriately labeled *The End of Your Rope* (FANTASTIC ADVENTURES, July, 1950), the stories were little more than a blend of situation comedy and vaudeville done in narrative style, replete with puns, mixed metaphors, rhyming phrases, alliteration, phonetic dialogue and virtually anything else that could be thrown into the pot. This madhouse concoction ran for 22 stories, most of them novelette length.

BLOCH was also proving he could do some effective work in straight science fiction with *The Fear Planet* in the Feb., 1943 SUPER SCIENCE STORIES, and *Almost Human* in the July, 1943 FANTASTIC ADVENTURES. But the most unexpected results came from a story that Bloch considered a routine horror job titled *Yours Truly, Jack the Ripper* which appeared in WEIRD TALES for July, 1943. It told of the son of one of the women Jack the

Ripper had slain in England, still searching for the killer in today's United States, convinced that he is alive and that his killings are necromantic sacrifices that sustain his youth.

What makes a story catch on? No one knows. But on Jan. 7, 1944, *Yours Truly, Jack the Ripper* was adapted for Kate Smith's radio show on CBS. The Molle Mystery Theatre, NBC, dramatized it again on March 6, 1945. It was done again for *Stay Tuned For Terror*, and still again for *Murder by Experts*. Anthologies began to pick it up, including *The Mystery Companion*, *The Harlot Killer* and *The Unexpected*, but most important it was included in *The Fireside Book of Suspense stories* edited by Alfred Hitchcock in 1947, bringing Bloch to his attention and ultimately to the production of *Psycho*.

The Kate Smith rendition of *Yours Truly, Jack the Ripper* may have helped Bloch get the assignment in 1944 to adapt for radio 39 of his own tales, science fiction as well as weirds, for a program called *Stay Tuned for Terror*. The show folded when its Chicago producer, John Neblett, died in an airplane crash.

Helping to take the edge off the loss of *Stay Tuned for Terror* was the prestige publication in 1945 of the first collection of Robert Bloch's short stories by

Arkham House, a publishing firm founded by August Derleth and Donald Wandrei. *The Opener of the Way* contained an excellent cross-section of the best of Bloch's work, including *The Strange Flight of Richard Clayton*, *Yours Truly, Jack the Ripper*, *The Feast in the Abbey*, *Slave of the Flames*, and an excellent sampling of his stories in the Lovecraft vein. To fill out the volume Bloch wrote an additional new story for it, *One Way To Mars* (WEIRD TALES, July, 1945), a top-drawer psychiatric fantasy about the antics of a man trying to avoid being sold a one-way ticket to the Red Planet. It had a polish and finesse which Bloch, writing after hours and at full tilt, rarely bothered to give his work; and it betrayed no trace of the Lovecraft "monkey on his back".

AS EARLY as 1943 Bloch had switched a heavy part of his writing production to detective magazines. In 1947 he tried his hand at a full-length novel, *The Scarf*, which was published by Dial. Here he wrote in the manner of Raymond Chandler, with short, jolting sentences carrying the events relentlessly forward. This was the first of seven mystery novels. His own personal favorite, outside of *Psycho*, is *The Kidnaper*, published by Lion Books in 1954. "Nobody, but no-

body, liked this little effort, which is a matter-of-fact, straightforward account of a vicious psychopathic kidnaper, told in the first person," he complained. "I think it is my most honest book; there are no 'tricks' and there's no overt 'Look, Ma—I'm writing!' touches. I believe it was disliked just because it *was* realistic, and hence unpleasant."

Bloch had educated himself out of the Lovecraft style; but he would never lose the Lovecraft *method*. True, his themes were now conveyed with merciless, naked realism where before the language of a more genteel school of rhetoric partially softened his meaning. But his practice was still the same. To tell all. To hold nothing back. To build towards the ultimate horror with every device at hand and then spring it on the reader in all its "hideous totality". The terrors had slowly been converted from virtually unbelievable mythos to all-too-frightening aberrations of the human mind. But unfortunately the public wasn't ready for his brand of brutal directness, regardless of its authenticity.

Writing an autobiographical sketch in *THE FANSCIENT* for Summer, 1949, Bloch, at the age of 32, was optimistic, full of hope. The past decade, despite personal problems, had seemed

one of growth. But ten years later, at the age of 42, this attitude had changed to one of depression bordered on despair. Not even winning a "Hugo" for his short story *The Hell-Bound Train* could temper Bloch's pessimism, which he kept no secret. There had been some good things, most important of which were the new tuberculosis drugs which had rescued his wife from semi-invalidism by 1954. The same year he severed association with the Gustav Marx Agency to engage in full-time writing. The rest had been somewhat of a nightmare.

Writing went on endlessly till there was no joy in it. Occasionally there was a radio adaptation. Periodically a mystery novel appeared. He was frequently making sales to better men's magazines like *PLAYBOY*; but just as many yarns were still being sold for little better than a cent a word. Bloch felt that he was on an endless treadmill. Nothing seemed to be happening.

Now, among the friends that Bloch had made was a science fiction enthusiast with the unlikely name of Samuel Anthony Peeples whom he had met during the 12th Annual World Science Fiction Convention at San Francisco in 1954. Peeples' only claim to fame in science fiction was the writing of a preface for

the hard-cover anthology, *Travelers in Space*, published by Gnome Press in 1951. However, in the field of the western novel he was highly respected. Frank Gruber, famed detective story writer, was so impressed with his ability, that he brought him to Hollywood in 1957 where Peeples became a "solid sender" in TV. Peeples was just as sold on Bloch's potential and determined to pull a "Gruber" on him.

PRIOR to attending the 17th World Science Fiction Convention at Detroit in 1959, Bloch poured his accumulated disillusionment into a dark piece called *Funnel of God* (FANTASTIC SCIENCE FICTION, Jan., 1960). It reminded one of the defiant negativism of Mark Twain's *Mysterious Stranger*. But upon his return from the convention, he received a long-distance phone call from Peeples, who offered him the carrot of a guaranteed assignment to do one script for the TV show *Lock-Up*, a series built around the career of a wealthy lawyer who takes on worthy but "hopeless" cases without fee.

The 39 adaptations Bloch had done for *Stay Tuned For Terror* now stood him in good stead. The producers liked his first script and asked for more. Bloch, who had only planned to stay three weeks in Hollywood, set-

tled down. He picked up an assignment to write for *Alfred Hitchcock's* TV program; and the "master of suspense" had already purchased the film rights to *Psycho*.

No one, least of all Bloch, expected anything special from the film. When it became a hit Bloch was not only successful but famous as well. The public taste had finally caught up with Bloch.

He moved his family to Hollywood in July, 1960. He expanded his writing for television to *Thriller*, the hour-length *Alfred Hitchcock Shows*, *Whispering Smith*, and Jack Webb's *True* series. Motion pictures credited to him included *The Couch*, *The Cabinet of Caligari* and the forthcoming *Merry-Go-Round*, based on a story by Bradbury.

Evaluating most writers in the fantasy field, one usually concludes by asking: What did he contribute to the development of science fiction? In this case the question should be reversed to read: What part did science fiction play in the development of Robert Bloch? The answer is that it provided the catalyst which made it possible for him to emerge as one of the nation's greatest writers of psychological terror. Therein lies the solution to the paradoxical relationship that has always existed between Robert Bloch and the science fiction world. **THE END**



THE SPECTROSCOPE

By S. E. COTTS

Conditionally Human. By Walter M. Miller, Jr. 191 pp. Ballantine Books. Paper: 50¢.

Though these stories have been published before in magazine form, they are collected here for the first time and constitute a valid and interesting reading experience. There are three novellas included—the title story, *The Darfsteller*, and *Dark Benediction* (originally a Ziff-Davis story). Though they were all written prior to Miller's more famous work, *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, they are not in any way immature. Miller very definitely knew his craft then, and though I personally enjoy a fine novel more thoroughly than a fine short story, there is no cause for complaint here.

The first story, *Conditionally Human*, deals with a social topic often treated in the field—the burgeoning birth rate, the arbitrary limits set on childbirth and the cataloguing of couples

according to their genetic possibilities. The yen for offspring in the less fortunate couples has been somewhat subverted first by breeding long-lived and intelligent animals and, for specially fit couples, neutroids whose age set and intelligence could be predetermined. This world is seen through the eyes and mind of the “dog catcher” of the future, Terry Norris, who never questioned the way things were until. . . .

The second story, *The Darfsteller*, does for the drama of the future what J. G. Ballard's, *The Sound Sweep*, did for the music. In this “great” millenium, the live actor almost ceased to exist. Thanks to modern science art was packaged to an extent never before possible. Most actors and actresses capitulated to what they felt was inevitable by selling themselves to Smithfield's, a company which produced Electronic-robotic analogues of each performer. Thus the same actor-

mannequin coordinated with the proper sound tape could play simultaneously in dozens of shows all over the country. But there are always holdouts in any system, and one of these, a former star, has become a janitor in one of the mechanized theaters in order to remain near what remained of his profession or to torture himself, or maybe both. What happens when he sees a chance to revenge himself for the indignities he has endured, forms Mr. Miller's novella.

The last of the series, *Dark Benediction*, concerns the breakdown of civilization that occurs when a strange plague strikes Earth. Unlike most plagues, it doesn't kill; instead, its victims develop scaly, grey skin, and also some other strange qualities less easy to identify. Also, unlike most plagues, it is spread neither by germ nor by virus, but by the craving of the victim to reach out and touch others. Out of this strange setting, author Miller has fashioned not, as one might expect, a tale of panic and horror (though these elements do enter in), but a story of sick people who are not really sick and well people who are infected, but more by their own blindness than by anything else.

Many of the things which gave *A Canticle for Leibowitz* such unusual depth grace these stories as well. Happily, Miller

is one of the writers who doesn't shy away from writing about tolerance, religion, compassion, dignity—all those old chestnuts which unfortunately seem to have gone out of style in life as well as literature. His novel and these stories are living proof (if such be needed) that such qualities can appear without weakening or feminizing or Pollyannaizing the action and drama of a plot. But the heart of Miller's gift is to have the development and movement of his work take place as much or more in the psychological makeup and attitudes of his very real characters as in their geographical locale or physical circumstances. Thus we get a kind of writing that has about it an inevitable quality which doesn't depend on tricks or gimmicks or gadgets, and which is pure gold all the way through.

The Mathematical Magpie. *Edited with an Introduction and Commentary by Clifton Fadiman.* 300 pp. Simon and Schuster. \$4.95.

Even if this book had nothing to recommend it, I would mention it here because it would win in a walk the title for the handsomest and best laid-out book of the year. From the whimsical and cheerful cover design (even the best of the hard cover sf books seem to have dreary, un-

imaginative covers) to the beautiful thick paper and large type, the book is a pleasure to handle and a fine permanent library edition. But when such beauty proves to be more than skin deep, and the contents match their surroundings in quality, this is indeed a red letter day.

The book has eighty-four selections, being (to quote the subtitle) "more stories, mainly transcendental, plus subsets of essays, rhymes, music, anecdotes, epigrams, and other prime oddments and diversions, rational or irrational. . . ." There is a common denominator in all this diversity—the "infinite domain of mathematics." And it is quite a trick to compile a book on mathematics that will appeal to both the laymen and the experts. This present volume comes close to the mark, as I have tried it out on various friends whose reactions to "figgers" run the gamut from awe to adoration.

The book is dedicated to Edward Kasner, who held a chair in mathematics at Columbia University until his death in 1955. Mr. Fadiman was one of his students, and, in his introduction, he tries and (he will be glad to learn) succeeds in giving us a living word portrait of a great man.

Some of the short stories included may be familiar to sf readers from other sources. Cer-

tainly some of the names will be—Arthur Clarke, Isaac Asimov, Mark Clifton, James Blish. But don't be put off by this. The bulk of the material will be new, for Fadiman has tapped the most diverse sources.

My most favorite selection in the whole book is a gem of an essay by the humorist Stephen Leacock, called "A, B, and C—The Human Element in Mathematics." I cannot guarantee that everyone will agree with my choice of Leacock's riotous destruction of that sacred educational institution, the written problem, but I cannot imagine any reader who would not get many pleasurable hours from the book as a whole.

The Perfect Planet. *By Evelyn E. Smith. 224 pp. Avalon Books. \$2.95.*

Each of us probably has his own idea as to what constitutes an ideal planet, and, being a nation of individualists, some may consider it a planet where it's always summer, or where it's always winter, or where there are one hundred men to every girl, or one hundred girls to every man. However, Evelyn Smith has long had a well-merited reputation as one of the most individual individualists, and consequently the planet depicted here is one which was originally set up as a health farm for the

corpulent ladies of the galaxy. However, the colony was cut off from the mother planet during the Hiatus of the wars, and when contact is re-established by a two-man (or rather a man and woman) expeditionary force two hundred years later, the planet, Artemis, boasts a very strange philosophy, indeed.

This mission, composed of Captain Speers and Lt. Moodie, is uncertain whether they will find any signs of life on Artemis after all this time. But life there is in abundance, in the form of the most glorious physical specimens who pounce upon Speers' and Moodie's avoirdupois and flab like missionaries upon the heathen. The boss of Artemis, the gorgeous Col. Kolinsky, sees these poor human bodies as Artemis' chance. Put them through the most rigorous hygienic program and then ship them back from where they came as walking, breathing advertisements for Artemisian way of life and as the forerunners of all those who will flock to Artemis and thus restore her to her position as "milk farm" of the Galaxy.

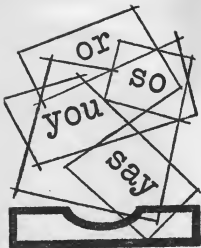
It is only to be expected that today, with our mania for Vic Tanny and Metrecal and No-Cal, that a colossal spoof should be written on these foibles. And I suppose it is also only natural that such a book should be as lightweight and uncalorific as

the events and people it describes. In short, to carry my pun further, I guarantee you won't "gain" by reading this novel, but neither will you lose.

Through Time and Space with Ferdinand Feghoot. *By Grendel Briarton. Paradox Press (Berkeley, California) \$1.25.*

To those who, as R. Bretnor says in his introduction, on hearing a bad pun "groan but, groaning, still come back for more," this slim volume will be a tremendous boon. Since I admit belonging to this group (is it a majority or a minority?) to whom a pun is not a "pun"-ishment, to whom a bad-good movie is as entertaining as a good-good movie, etc., I welcome this collection of Feghoots. If so far-ranging a saviour as Feghoot can ever be said to be contained within the confines of a book, then this one presents the forty-five previously published adventures plus five more previously unrelated. And for those who have wondered what this "paragon" looks like, there are numerous illustrations by Bruce Ariss.

I know such reading is not everybody's idea of fun, but for those who start in, I guarantee they will keep re-reading the ones they don't get the first time around. Such a determined readership is worthy of Feghoot's finest.



Dear Cele:

I'd like to express my thanks to Mr. Read and Mr. Bridges for their letters about the extraterrestrial life series.

However, Mr. Bridges' quarrel with the use of the word *Venusian* is based on two false assumptions: (1) that the English language depends on Latin grammar; (2) that scientists in general, and astronomers in particular, are always logical.

Firstly, English is a language that has no real grammar of its own. As in all languages, usage is determined by the common spoken dialects. Although a Roman might not have said *Venusian*, there are so few people around today who speak Latin all the time that they have no influence on our language. So *Venu-*

sian, abhorrent though it might have been to Cicero, is used with perfect tranquility by astronomers, poets, men-in-the-street, and science fiction writers. I've never seen the form *Venerian* used outside of science fiction stories, and never seen the form *Venustian* at all, before Mr. Bridges' letter. The majority of the English-speaking peoples—especially on this side of the Atlantic—don't bother to look up Latin roots when they need a word; they plunge right in and coin a word. If it survives the struggles of common usage, it's a word, even though you won't find it in Latin texts.

Secondly, it is a grievous error to assume that astronomers worry over the etymology of their terms. If I were addicted to worrying about such things, I'd be much more upset over terms like *Alpha Centauri*, (Greek letter followed by Latin genitive case) than *Venusian*.

Finally, why should the pronunciation be "the light and airy Vee-new-shun?" What's so light and airy about a planet that might well be a dustbowl, with a surface temperature of 600°F, and a suffocating atmosphere of carbon dioxide, where the sun never shines?

Ben Bova

● For that matter why should people who live on the planet Earth be called Terrans?

Dear Miss Goldsmith:

Please receive this letter with affection, remembering that criticism is the concern of love; a love which you and AMAZING have earned diligently.

The August-'62 issue (Vol. 36-#8) was excellent, though I hate waiting for Ben Bova's next (Uncle Isaac, move *way* over!), and can do without Randall Garrett's Breadfruit puns (?) on the authors' names. Also, I am disappointed that so erudite an editor as thou should answer a reader's letter. "You heard about Rembrandt and Rubens and Goya and Matisse? Ever see them use first names on their art work?" I assume you intend reference to Rembrandt *van Rijn*, not Ignatius X. Rembrandt.

Robt. Warlock

Pasadena, California

● *We love you, too. You are the only reader who seems to have heard of that great Martian painter, Ignatius X. Rembrandt.*

Dear Editor:

To comment on the SF Profiles by Sam Moskowitz. He's never really let me down yet, but his subjects seem to be decreasing in prominence and productivity. After all, C. L. Moore hasn't written anything much in science-fiction (at least under her name) for many years. You, dear editor, said, when the se-

ries was initiated, that Moskowitz would profile the "boys who are writing now," rather than the past masters who had appeared previously in FANTASTIC. Any great author who's done almost nothing except re-write some magazine stories for book publication during the last dozen years is not what I call an actively-producing writer. (Yes, I *am* referring to A. E. van Vogt)

And then you tell us that Henry Kuttner is next! If he's one of the "boys who are writing now", he must be a ghost writer! (Uh hum; that's a pun) Seriously, however, I do admit he was a great science fiction writer.

In December, it's Robert Bloch, you say. This time I must violently object. True, Mr. Bloch is a devoted and well-known fan, an sf writer for many years, and most assuredly a superb screenwriter. *But* most of his work belongs in the horror-fantasy class rather than in sf. And it seems, being so busy authoring TV and movie scripts, he won't be turning out much science fiction for a while. He would fit comfortably in FANTASTIC.

For future profiles, let me suggest to Mr. Moskowitz these two celebrated storytellers: Arthur C. Clarke and Edmond Hamilton. In many ways radically different, they would be ripe and

intriguing candidates for profiling. Clarke is rivalled only by Asimov as a science fiction writer renowned also as a scientist in the public light. Hamilton has probably produced more sf than any other living person in the field, and is making a comeback, witness the pages of AMAZING.

In conclusion, please keep the SF Profiles.

Douglas Taylor
419 East 11th,
Hutchinson, Kansas

● *You are psychic. Our February profile is Clarke.*

Dear Mr. Lobsenz:

I think that you were a bit naive in your editorial in saying that no television program will be able to survive if it continues to be simple-minded. It seems that the general public wants that type of "science fiction." They immediately imagine bug-eyed monsters and beautiful girls from Venus when the term "science fiction" is mentioned. Narrow plots, it seems, are agreeable with narrow minds.

Television has always seemed to reach for the lowest common denominator. I am sure that this trend will continue, with more horrid westerns and poor science fiction sandwiched between commercials.

Such amateurish writing is very unfortunate in that it gives true science fiction a bad image

in the minds of individuals who enjoy a well composed literary work. In formal education science fiction as an art has no chance to raise its voice. The educators are prejudiced by the bug-eyed monsters on the screens and idiot box.

I persuaded one professor some time ago to read a short story by Isaac Asimov to the later delight of the professor, who has become more liberal toward science fiction. If by some miracle the same good materials were put on the video waves (as GALAXY was once put on the air waves), the result would be that AMAZING would have a lot more readers and a great deal more competition.

I beg to differ with Mr. Adolfsen in saying that science fiction should exclude politics. Science fiction should encompass all sciences both natural and social. After all, both are necessary to life as we know it. (Perhaps even as we do not know it!)

Let's hope that the light of AMAZING and the few other great mags continues to shine on all phases of life in all the universe.

David J. Bailey

Post Office Box 1071

University of Richmond, Va.

● *Amen! Perhaps I am naive, but over the very long run, what's bad on TV seems to fail. Trouble is, it is replaced by other bad stuff!*

Dear Editor:

In comparing the September AMAZING with the August, I find the August issue is livelier because of the excellent profile by Sam Moskowitz. Good stories are the backbone of any sf magazine, of course, but the "extras" are what give it character. The article by Ben Bova in the September issue was okay, but my preference is for science fiction articles rather than science fact.

The August cover was superbly done, but almost too realistic. The September cover, though, has a softness and far away quality that spells out science fiction. The lead story in both issues was the best, with Jack Vance outpointing old master Edmond Hamilton. I can't make any comments on the serial, as I always wait until a serial is complete before starting—and I can't find my July issue!

Reprints are okay, especially if introduced by Sam Moskowitz. And I can stand Benedict Breadfruit as long as anyone else. But please keep the letter column—it's one of the few places where fans can keep in touch with each other.

In fact, perhaps you could let your readers know about a fan publication that is illustrated with pictures of fans, authors, artists, and editors as they appear at World Science Fiction

Conventions. Convention Annual No. 2, Chicon III Edition, will be 20-30% larger than the Pittcon Edition, which had 191 photos, convention report, and a total of 50 pages. The Chicon III Edition special prepublication rate is \$1.60 until Dec. 10, 1962, with regular price of \$2.00 after that, to my address.

Jay Kay Klein
219 Sabine St.
Syracuse, N.Y.

Dear Miss Goldsmith:

I am 14 years of age and buy AMAZING and FANTASTIC occasionally: However, the increasing quality of both your mags, especially AMAZING, may force me to subscribe or at least purchase whenever new ones appear.

I love Sam Moskowitz SF Profile and thought C. L. Moore's was *fabulous*! I'm only regretful that I missed Simak's, Leinster's, Sturgeon's, etc. and wish I could compensate for my blunder. Do you, or would you, by any chance, sell back issues?

Alan Simons
912 Manor Rd.
Alexandria, Va.

● AMAZING has no back issue department. To obtain old issues of this and any other sf magazine see the Books-Magazine listing in the Classified section pp. 129 and 130.

EDITORIAL

(Continued from page 5)

in this field—about the absence of young writers. Where are tomorrow's fantasy-makers? we ask (with a good deal of self-pity because we have all this white space to fill every month).

It is only just, then, that when we *do* unearth a bright young talent, we share the good news with you. The inveterate readers of by-lines may have noticed that in the August issue of *AMAZING* and in this issue (as well as in the recent pages of our sister magazine, *FANTASTIC*) we have run several ingenious stories by a "Roger Zelazny." Several people have accused us of making up this name as a pseudonym for Cele Goldsmith. To choke that foul rumor in its cradle, we bring you herewith a few words from the Zelazny's mouth, which tells you how a fantasy and science-fiction writer gets that way:

"In 1410, when the valiant Poles broke the charge of the

Teutonic Knights at Tannenberg, my ancestors cleverly escaped the fighting by forging the armor—hence, the name "Zelazny", which is derived from the Polish word for "iron".

"I was born in Cleveland, and began reading sf when I began reading (I still have many of my battered boyhood issues of *Captain Future*). I took my B.A. at Western Reserve University and my M.A. at Columbia (in English and Comparative Literature); as an undergrad I minored in Psychology. My Master's thesis was entitled, *Two Traditions and Cyril Tourneur: An Examination of Morality and Humor Comedy Conventions in 'The Revenger's Tragedy'*.

"I trained as a guided missile launcher crewman at Fort Bliss, Texas, which was nice, because I could get into Juarez for the Sunday bullfights. I fence epee, raise turtles, enjoy exotic meals (excepting turtle soup), am 25, and, looking upwards, I think I talk too much."

As a service to our readers, here is a list of the Hugo winners for 1962, announced at the recent 20th World Science Fiction Convention:

Best Novel: *Stranger in a Strange Land*, by Robert Heinlein

Best Short Fiction: The "Hothouse" series by Brion Aldiss

Best Dramatic Presentation: Rod Serlings CBS-TV Series, *Twilight Zone*

Best Professional Artist: Ed Emsh

Best Professional Magazine: *Analog*

Best Amateur Magazine: *Warhoan*

A special award, we are pleased to announce, was made to Cele Goldsmith, Editor of *AMAZING* and *FANTASTIC*, for "... the continued and consistent improvement, both visually and qualitatively, in the magazines which she edits . . ."



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*He spun around, trying to
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come. He fell. His head struck
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